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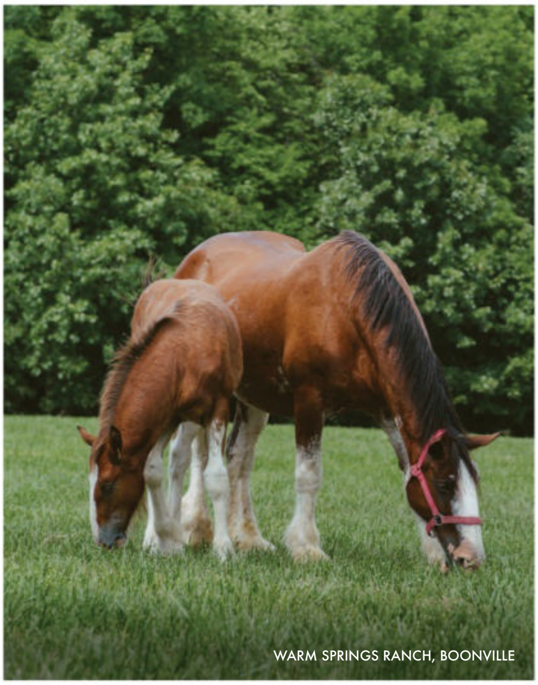

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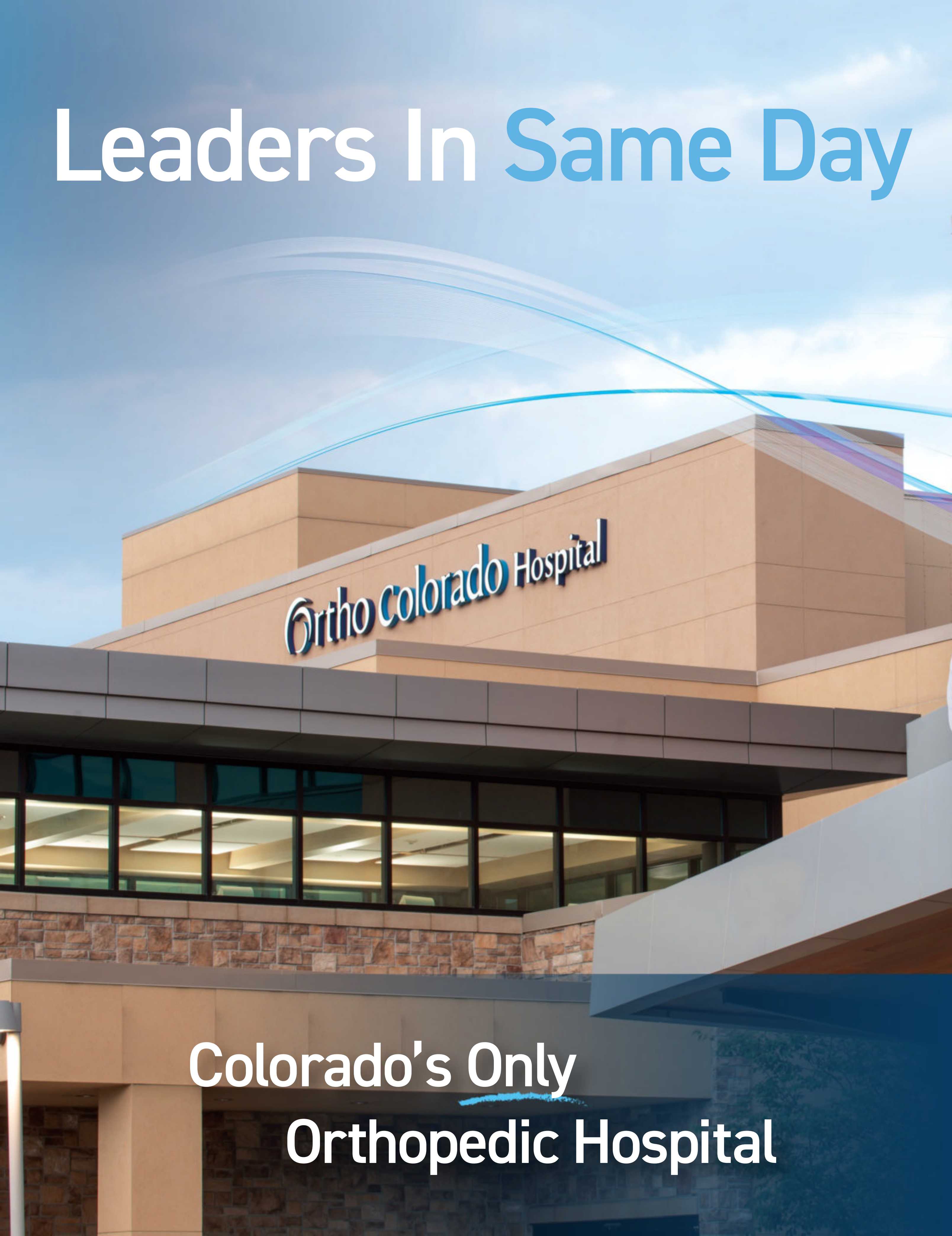
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Journey within

Spring has sprung, and with it comes that unmistakable itch to shake off the remnants of winter and seek out adventure. Our annual Statecations issue is here to help you get shaking. And the best part is, you don't even have to venture far from home. Our quest? To uncover the best of what Colorado has to offer among the state's hidden gems and all-star attractions. In this issue, you'll find new places to stay, explore, and enjoy for a great escape right in our own backyard.

This month, we've swapped our jet-setting aspirations for some denim-clad, blue-sky escapades. Because nothing says "rugged, yet refined" quite like a perfect pair of worn-in jeans. We've roamed the state to discover the unexpected and untamed, as well as the newly revamped and totally refreshed, to bring you a collection of destinations that have more to offer than ever before—and so much more than we even thought to imagine.

In "The Ultimate Colorado Road Trip," we take you on a whirlwind journey through the mountain towns of Buena Vista, Crested Butte, Carbondale, and Ouray. Each destination offers its own brand of appeal. Barefoot concerts on the lawn in Buena Vista and crazy colorful nature displays in Crested Butte. In Carbondale, there's a rejuvenating arts and wellness scene, and in Ouray, the adventures and history are just as fascinating as the Million Dollar Highway.

But what's a true escape without a touch of opulence? In "Suite Wars," we invite you to feast your eyes on the most decadent hotel suites in the state, where you can revel in the lap of luxury without ever leaving our beloved Rocky Mountain playground.

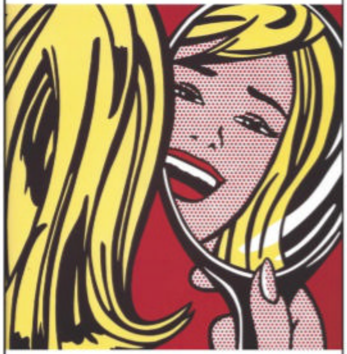
So, whether you're a thrill-seeker or simply in need of some fresh mountain air after a particularly long, cold, snowy winter, let this issue serve as a gentle reminder that the journey is just as important as the destination in Colorado, no matter which road you happen to take.

I hope you enjoy the coming warmer months as much as I intend to.

Stephanie Wilson

Stephanie Wilson
Executive Editor

@stephwilll



Roy Lichtenstein, *Girl with Mirror*, 1964

Destination spotlight

As we put this issue together, quite a few places caught my attention. These are some of the new additions to my summer itinerary wish list:

1.

South Main in Buena Vista: A walkable, pedestrian community with elements of New Urbanism, its streets brimming with boutiques, galleries, and green spaces where you can kick off your shoes and dance to the sounds of live music all summer long.

2.

Powers Art Center in Carbondale: Currently showcasing an exhibition on American Pop Art featuring works by Robert Rauschenberg, Roy Lichtenstein, Andy Warhol, and other greats.

3.

Wiesbaden Hot Springs in Ouray: Home to the subterranean Vapor Cave, an all-natural underground steam room and soaking pool that I desperately want to sink into.

4.

Driving the Million Dollar Highway: A journey that sounds terrifying and exhilarating at the same time. Less of the former and more of the latter for the person in the driver's seat (toward the middle of the road) than the passenger's (mere inches from the sheer drop-offs that line the twists and turns of the curvaceous and admittedly dangerous roadway through the mountains south of Ouray).

STEPHANIE WILSON, MARIO MASITTI; GIRL WITH MIRROR COURTESY POWERS ART CENTER

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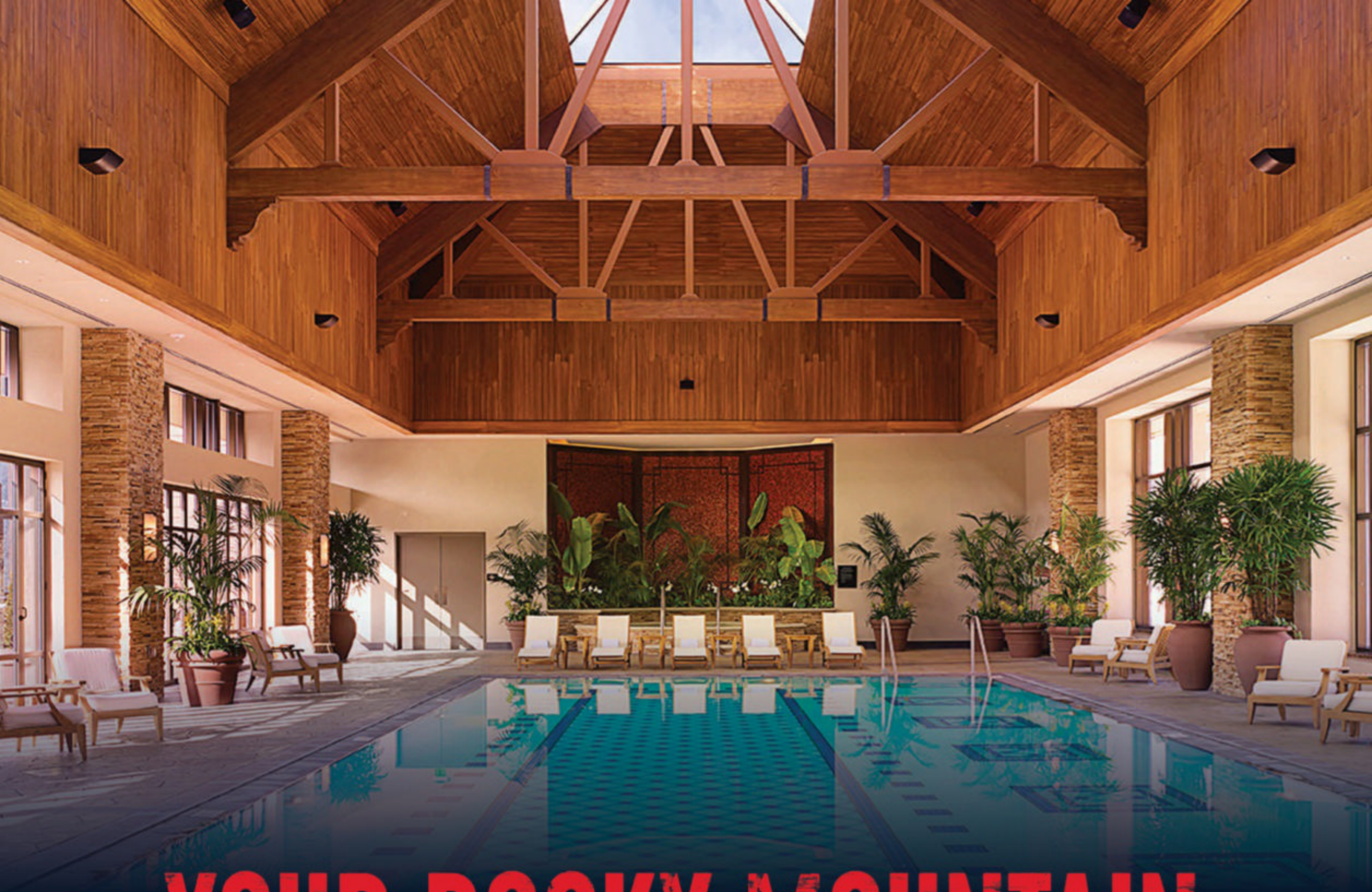

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Social chatter

Discover Colorado through the lens of photographer Taylor Lods (@taylor_lods_photography). His captivating image of Denver's Union Station evokes a sense of wanderlust, inspiring us to embark on new adventures. Colorado is brimming with experiences and landscapes just waiting to be explored. Where will your Colorado journey take you this season? Share your exclusive Colorado moments on Instagram and tag @denverlifemagazine for a chance to be featured in an upcoming issue.

ROB HAMMER
ROADSIDE MEDITATIONS
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Online exclusive

Embark on a visual odyssey with photographer Rob Hammer's new book, *Roadside Meditations*. Explore the open road's allure, uncovering hidden gems alongside Hammer and his husky-shepherd mix, Mojo. Delve into our exclusive interview at denverlifemagazine.com, where Rob shares captivating stories behind his breathtaking photography. Join the adventure and experience the world through his lens.

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WRITTEN BY SAHALE GREENWOOD; PHOTOGRAPHY: @TAYLOR_LODS_PHOTOGRAPHY, ROB HAMMER

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30th Annual Furry Scurry May 6

■ Bring your pooch and hit the paths in Wash Park for a two-mile walk to support the Dumb Friends League's mission to end pet homelessness, then hit the Flealess Market to pick up some treats for the good boys and good girls in your life. **furryscurry.org**

calendar 05.23

ARTS

MCA MAX MIX 2023

MAY 4

■ The dress code matches the vibe at spring's most ambitious runway show at The Cookie Factory—a celebration of MCA Denver, MAX Clothing, and fashion designer Maria Cornejo. As a precursor, Cornejo joins artist Tara Donovan at MCA Denver on May 3 for the “Icons: Art, Fashion, and the Creative Process” discussion. **mcadenver.org**

SeriesFest

MAY 5–10

■ Indie TV takes center stage at SeriesFest, Season 9, Denver's own “Sundance for television.” Witness the best pilots from emerging and established creators worldwide, showcased at the Sie FilmCenter and various locales, including the iconic Red Rocks Park & Amphitheatre. Panels, workshops, and premieres abound—a binge-worthy affair you don't want to miss. **seriesfest.com**

Denver Fashion Week Spring/Summer 2023

MAY 6–13

■ Colorado's largest fashion week kicks off with a dynamic showcase of local couture and culminates with styles from international boutiques—with showcases of streetwear & sneakers, kids couture, sustainable styles, and more hitting the catwalk at The Brighton every night in between. **denverfashionweek.com**

LoDo Comedy Show: Friends of Vail Comedy

MAY 24

■ Brought to us by the same team behind Vail Comedy Festival—which has comedians flying in from around the country for a hilarious Memorial Day weekend in the mountains—LoDo Comedy Show invited some of the top touring acts to stop by The Black Buzzard at Oskar Blues for a warm-up set on Wednesday night. **lodocomedy.com**

Mountainfilm

MAY 25–29

■ Immerse yourself in Telluride's renowned documentary film festival, a spirited celebration of the genre since 1979, championing adventure, activism, social justice, and environmental causes. Engage with filmmakers and changemakers, attend insightful speaker series, explore art exhibits, and savor delightful social events. Ignite your passion for a better world. **mountainfilm.org**

HOME & GARDEN

Denver Urban Garden's Spring Plant Sale

MAY 12–13

■ From vegetable plants to organic flowers, DUG's spring plant sale has everything you need to get your garden growing—plus informative workshops and expert tips, gardening, activities for the kids, live music, and food truck fare. **dug.org**

Wash Park Home Tour

MAY 13

■ This long-standing event is a chance to see for yourself what's going on inside the walls of four distinctive homes in East Washington Park. Afterward, stop by the Mother's Day Market Street Fair for artisan goods. **washparkhometour.org**

FESTIVALS

Somebody's Friend Movement & Music Festival

MAY 18–21

■ A four-day celebration of the Front Range dance community manifests through pop-up street shows, ticketed dance performances, culinary experiences (a plated dinner with circus performers, for example), movement classes, massive dance parties, and more. It brings over 40 dance companies and artists together on two stages and in the streets of the RiNo Arts District. **somebodysfriend.com**

Boulder Creek Festival

MAY 26–29

■ Dead Phish Orchestra headlines this beloved annual affair featuring live music from over 30 bands on three stages. Adding to the appeal: over 30 eateries serving summer street fare, 20-plus breweries pouring local samples at the Creekside Beer Festival, more than 200 artisans proffering handmade wares at the Makers' Market, a Streetwise Art Battle, and more. **bouldercreekfest.com**

Denver Arts Festival

MAY 27–28

■ This fine arts festival in Central Park is dedicated to showcasing and celebrating Colorado artists, creatives, and makers. **denverartfestival.com**

THE INSIDE SCOOP!

For more events this month check out our online calendar. Just scan the QR Code.

COMPILED BY JULIA RUBLE ; PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF DENVER DUMB FRIENDS LEAGUE

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Our May issue celebrates the joys of a relaxing vacation without the stress of a long journey. Discover the magic of Denver as a destination when you stay at the **Halcyon, a hotel in Cherry Creek.**

We're offering one lucky reader a chance to win a fabulous staycation package, which includes a complimentary two-night stay in a lavish suite at the Halcyon, a $150 food & beverage credit to indulge at Local Jones, and $100 to spend at the stunning rooftop pool—plus free parking and waived resort fees.

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STEVEN VISNEAU

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Tending the trails
Learn about the positive impact you could have working with Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado, p. 28.

WRITTEN BY SAHALE GREENWOOD; PHOTOGRAPHY: MOUNTAIN ROOTS FOOD PROJECT

High-altitude harvest

Colorado's unpredictable climate poses significant challenges for gardeners. To help navigate these obstacles, we asked Roni Pasi, director of regenerative agriculture at **MOUNTAIN ROOTS FOOD PROJECT**, a regenerative farm in Gunnison, for some expert guidance. To ensure a strong start for your garden, Pasi recommends transplanting seedlings or small plants—whether you've grown them indoors or purchased them from a local garden shop—from their pots into the garden soil. This approach ensures that you won't begin with empty garden beds. Once the threat of the last frost has passed, Pasi suggests planting cool-weather crops such as broccoli, cabbage, kale, peas, radishes, beets, carrots, lettuce, and spinach. Be prepared to tend to your sprouts, as you aren't the only one eager to enjoy the harvest. "If you're growing vegetables, wildlife will visit often," Pasi says. "Instead of fighting nature, think of how you can work with it." She suggests installing a nesting box to deter owls and planting perennial flowers to encourage pollinators throughout the growing season. While it may be tempting to plant those poppies the first sunny day when temps climb above 60 degrees, patient gardeners who work with nature's seasons and species will be rewarded with flourishing gardens that never weathered the wrath of Colorado's signature late-spring snowstorms.

mountainrootsfoodproject.org
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park manager

Legend of the falls

For the 140th anniversary of Seven Falls, The Broadmoor got it a new park manager: **Craig Hilton**. *by Stephanie Wilson*

Seven Falls has been a staple of the Pikes Peak Region since 1883, when the first visitors were charged a toll of 10 cents to visit the park by road. Today, as one of the state's most captivating natural wonders, Seven Falls is an important part of the heritage of the Western United States. It's historic, it's moving, and it's a journey in and of itself. Meet Craig Hilton, a Kiwi native with an adventurous spirit and a penchant for the great outdoors. He's been with The Broadmoor for a decade, most recently as the longtime manager and unofficial historian of The Ranch at Emerald Valley, one of the resort's three all-inclusive wilderness properties. As The Broadmoor Seven Falls enters its 140th anniversary season, Hilton is taking on a new role as park manager at one of Colorado's most stunning natural attractions.

"It's called Seven Falls, but it's a lot more than just a waterfalls. I hear that again and again from guests. They say it wasn't what they were anticipating—it was better."

"You start the experience walking through a stunning box canyon, with 790-foot-tall granite walls with a stream running through the bottom. It's also got hiking trails, a delicious restaurant, exciting zip lines with Soaring Adventures—some of the best and longest zip lines are right here in our own backyard."

"Once you walk up the canyon, you can go up 224 steps to the top of the falls, and if you want to keep going, there are two trails: Midnight Falls, which is a 20-minute out-and-back path from the top of the falls, and Inspiration Point, a 40-minute out-and-

photography by CHAD CHISHOLM

back trail. Inspiration Point is more uphill and a longer workout, but from the vantage point, you can see down through the box canyon to Colorado Springs and the plains beyond."

"Seven Falls is one of the oldest tourist attractions in the state, so there's a lot of history at this 'grandest mile of scenery in Colorado.'"

"Back in the day, access from the gate to the falls was by donkey. We had visiting celebrities such as Babe Ruth and Walt Disney on those donkeys, and they all had crazy names, like Rags, as in 'Rags to Riches.'"

"I always say the best way to see Colorado is on foot. Get out of your car, away from your computer, and start walking."

"I used to run a lot, but my cranky body won't let me anymore. Now, I love being connected to nature and disconnected from the world on a walk, a longer hike, or a bike ride."

"I'd like to expand upon our hiking trails even more, helping Seven Falls become more of a nature park that people plan a whole day to visit vs. just a few hours."

"Definitely try the Bubble Waffle Sundaes from our new Falling Waffles food truck. They're made-to-order bubble waffle sundaes with house-churned ice creams and tons of toppings and sauces. I like the 1858 Gold Rush, with two scoops of vanilla bean ice cream, caramel popcorn, chocolate chips, and caramel sauce. It's the ultimate post-hike tasty treat."

"And don't forget about Colorado's afternoon thunderstorms. Be prepared, and be patient for those storms to pass. And most importantly, be flexible in how you adventure."

"I have always had this image in my mind of what Colorado is supposed to look like. With my job at Seven Falls, it's like living in that postcard every day. This is what Colorado is supposed to be."

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Power of presence

Unlock your mind and unleash your stamina with **Run Mindful**'s trail running and meditation retreats.

by Sahale Greenwood

The best thing for a quick pace is a quiet mind. Running demands intense mental focus and determination, particularly when navigating challenging terrain and covering great distances. Just ask Timothy Olson. He is the ultra runner who set the speed record on the Pacific Crest Trail, running the 2,650-mile wilderness path that stretches between the Mexican and Canadian borders in just 51 days—a feat that takes most hikers roughly five months to complete. To keep such a grueling pace, Timothy required a super-human level of focus, which he was able to achieve through mindful meditation. "When we can quiet our minds and listen with our hearts," Timothy says, "we find valuable insights into living a joy-filled life that is truly and presently lived."

Today, he helps others experience the performance-enhancing benefits of mindfulness through Run Mindful. Led by Timothy and his wife Krista, Run Mindful retreats combine meditation with physical training to provide a holistic approach to running.

MIND OVER MILES Elevate your soles and souls at the **Run Mindful Trail Running & Meditation Retreat** in Boulder, June 9-12. Who knew enlightenment and perspiration went hand in hand?

TOP, JAYME BURTIS; BOTTOM, KRISTA OLSON

RUNNING, A THINKING MAN'S SPORT

Studies in 2020 and 2021 found that athletes who practiced mindfulness before and during a run had faster times and less fatigue follow-

KRISTA OLSON

ing a race. When your legs are screaming for you to stop, it's really your brain that's blocking you from achieving next-level stamina. Your legs will keep going if your brain tells them to, which is why training your brain for a long-distance run is just as essential as training your legs.

THE RUNDOWN

Timothy and Krista are leading a Run Mindful Trail Running & Meditation Retreat in Boulder this June. The four-day program provides an opportunity for aspiring long-distance runners to learn from the pros how to use mindfulness practices to improve stamina. Participants will gain practical tips, such as Krista's method of pre-run meditation and tuning into her body while running instead of listening to music, as well as Timothy's approach of concentrating on his breathing, initially slowing it down to relax his central nervous system and then quickening it to experience a burst of energy.

The retreat includes communal breakfasts and morning meditations, daily guided trail runs ranging from 3 to 20 miles, picnic lunches, mindfulness workshops, free time for optional activities, dinners, and early bedtimes. Open to everyone, from novice hikers to professional runners, the retreat welcomes all levels of meditation experience. DLM

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PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF VOLUNTEERS FOR OUTDOOR COLORADO

Trailblazing

Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado specializes in trail maintenance and restoration to preserve our access to the natural world. *by Chloe Wasserstrom*

If a tree falls in the forest and no one is around to hear it, it does still make a sound. And now it also blocks the path of your favorite hiking trail. Nature, although resilient, cannot clean up after itself. That is why Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado is dedicated to trail construction and maintenance. And as with the best service opportunities, volunteers stand to gain just as much as they give back. Volunteers with VOC learn to foster a deeper appreciation for the infrastructure necessary to get people into wild places.

Established in 1984 by dedicated recreationists who wanted to help maintain their beloved trails, VOC is led today by CEO Chris Nesset, who says that environmental stewardship is key to creating a strong local community. "It creates a sense of connection and commitment to caring," she says. This, in turn, leads to better outdoor access, healthier communities, better maintained resources, more educated recreational users—even more active voters and a greater sense of community.

From mudslides to meandering hikers causing erosion, trails face inevitable degradation. When a trail's boundaries become less clear, people begin to make their own paths. These so-called "social trails" ultimately harm the flora that's now underfoot. To help keep people in line, VOC works to maintain trails, in turn providing Coloradans with more chances to immerse in the outdoors. Volunteer projects range from installing a structure to hold the trail in place to digging the trail's surface to allow water to flow off the path. With 58 fourteeners, 42 state parks, 13 national forests and grasslands, and 13 national parks and monuments, Colorado has over 39,000 miles of hiking trails—that's a lot of land to cover. The United States Forest Service faces limited government funding, so volunteers are always needed.

From Pike's Peak to Pagosa Springs, Colorado trail maintenance depends on volunteers. Without volunteers and the aid of local organizations, trails inevitably become overgrown and unusable. If you're interested in helping keep things in check, VOC has over a hundred opportunities for you to lend a hand this summer, from trail maintenance to invasive species removal, campsite monitoring, and more. DLM

VOLUNTEERS FOR OUTDOOR COLORADO
303.715.1010 | voc.org | @voc_colorado

STATS

In 2021, Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado completed:
106 volunteer projects across **66** places, with **2,872** volunteers contributing **25,200** hours for a total donated labor value of **$763,812**.

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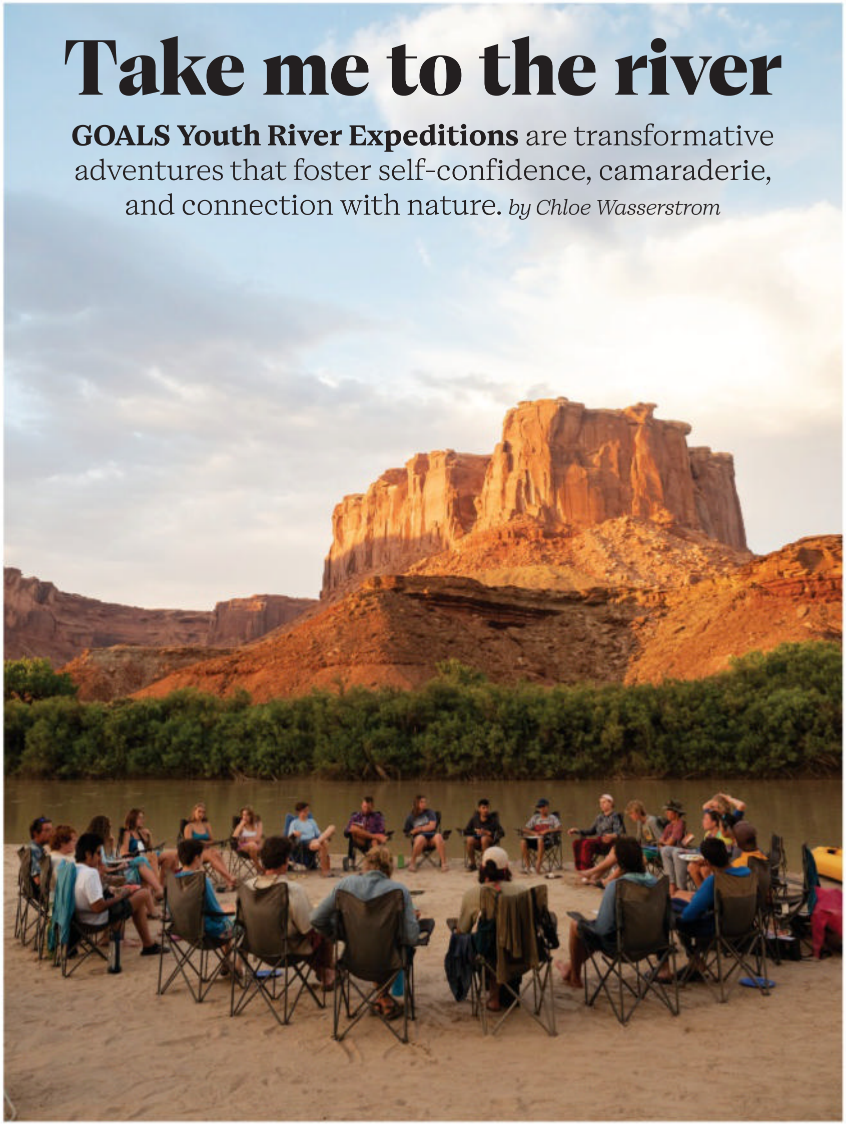
Take me to the river

GOALS Youth River Expeditions are transformative adventures that foster self-confidence, camaraderie, and connection with nature. *by Chloe Wasserstrom*



River enthusiast and executive director of GOALS Youth River Expeditions, Brett Hochmuth harnesses the power of waterways to foster and enhance human connections. The concept took root when Hochmuth, a former Idaho Springs middle school teacher, began taking his students on field trips to what he describes as the great equalizer: the river. During these six-day trips, he discovered that his students displayed more passion and purpose than throughout the rest of the school year. This inspired him to dedicate his life to sharing the benefits of river expeditions with young people beyond Clear Creek County.

GO OUTSIDE AND LEARN SOMETHING

As a nonprofit organization, GOALS (short for "go outside and learn something") aims to improve the future for children and the environment. By offering growth-focused river expeditions, they showcase the positive impact that nature and children can have on one another. While the majority of programs cater to young people, the organization also leads adult expeditions, such as the upcoming Rouge River trip in Oregon this September. During these journeys, Hochmuth and his experienced team of river guides spend a week exploring rivers and canyons across the western United States and international destinations. Hochmuth's ultimate goal is to help kids connect with their most authentic selves.

AROUND THE RIVER BEND

GOALS offers various expedition types, including those for elementary, middle, and high school students, as well as adult and specialty programs, with river trips running from March through September. Hochmuth is still accepting applications for the summer and fall seasons, using questionnaire responses from participants to create well-balanced expedition teams based on personalities and experiences. He emphasizes that all expeditions share the same mission and approach, regardless of the participants' age or experience level.

Throughout the multiday adventures, Hochmuth encourages participants to reflect on what they want to bring into their lives and what they need to let go of. Each adventurer receives a journal at the beginning of the journey, complete with prompts and readings tailored to the specific group and location. Around the campfire, campers share passages from their journals, sparking meaningful and open discussions under the stars. As Hochmuth explains, "Kids begin to shed their ego and speak to one another more openly and with greater understanding. They interact in ways that you don't often see in the high school cafeteria." DLM

➔ **GOALS YOUTH RIVER EXPEDITIONS** | goalsonrivers.org

CAMP, BEN SHAY; CANYON WALK, BRETT HOCHMUTH

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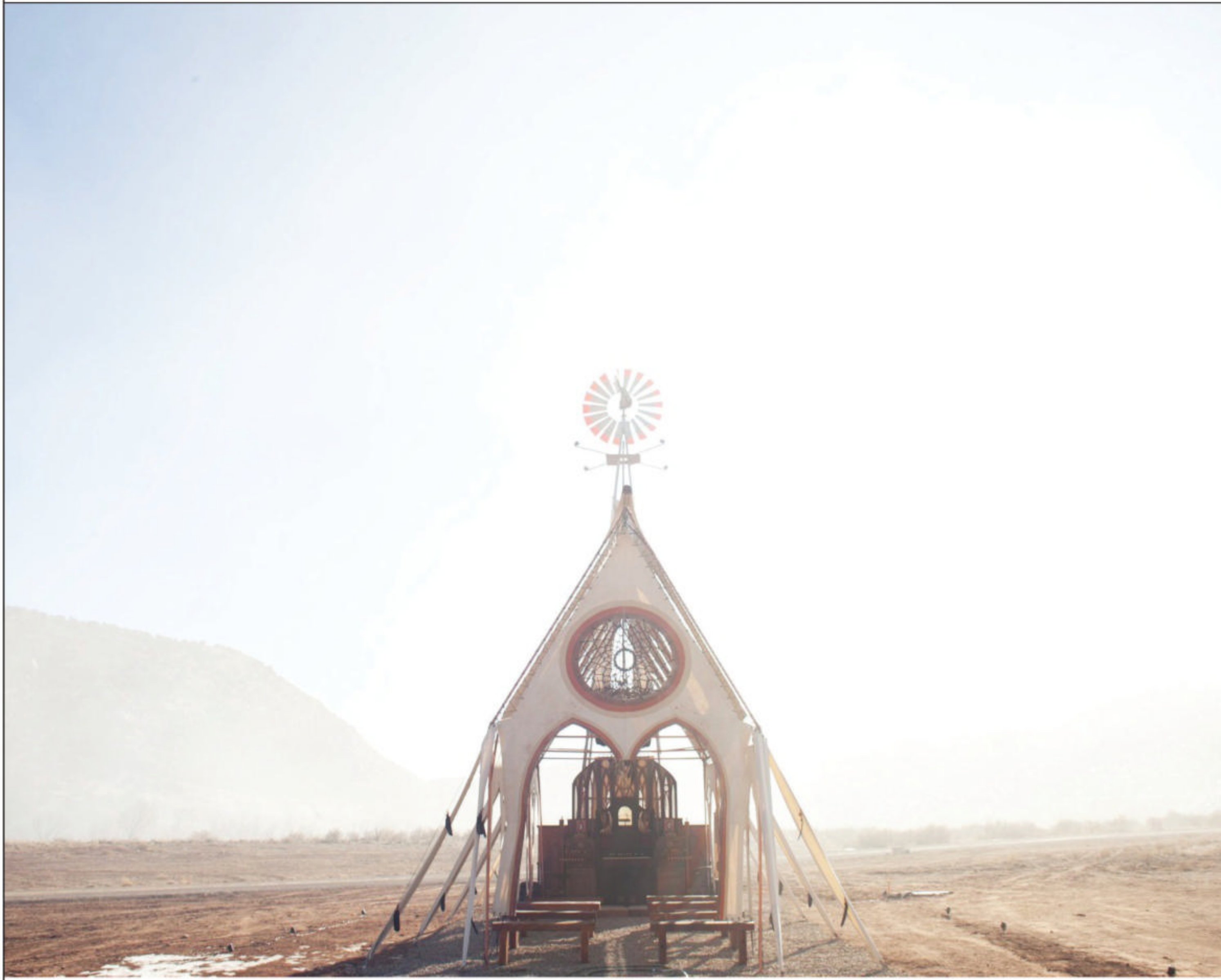
arts

ROADSIDE MEDITATIONS

HIGHWAY HORIZONS
Photographer Rob Hammer's coffee table book takes you on a subtly stunning cross-country road trip, p. 34.

SPOTLIGHT ▪ THEATER ▪ PERFORMANCE ▪ MUSIC



WRITTEN BY STEPHANIE WILSON; PHOTOGRAPHY: CAMPV

Burning van

Picture this: a sun-soaked, open-air chapel nestled amidst the untamed beauty of southwestern Colorado, the sounds of an ethereal pipe organ filling the air with otherworldly melodies. Welcome to Robert Hoehn's *Prairie Wind Chapel*, an awe-inspiring interactive installation that once graced the dusty plains of Burning Man, now residing in the eclectic haven of **CAMP V**, where the Planet V festival unfolds this Memorial Day weekend. An intimate, art-infused extravaganza formerly known as Burning Van, Planet V fuses art, nature, music, and community to create a sublime experience for those craving an alternative to the overwhelming intensity of the Playa. The weekend boasts a lineup of genre-defying artists and world-class DJs, alongside wellness workshops, fire arts, and interactive large-scale art, all in a setting that combines history, architecture, and the great outdoors. Situated outside the Wild West town of Naturita, just an hour west of Telluride, Camp V offers a range of accommodations, from refurbished miners' cabins and modern Airstreams to glamping tents, riverside campsites, and RV hookups. As the sun dips below the horizon, Planet V's nights come alive with aerialists, circus collectives, and silent discos, forging memories that will outlast the fleeting glow of the desert sky. **planetvfest.com @campvco**

ROB HAMMER
ROADSIDE MEDITATIONS
KEHRER

Roam the revealing roadside

Rob Hammer's new coffee table book *Roadside Meditations* is filled with his photographs of America's more mundane landscapes. Through the images, he shows viewers that the majesty is not in the destination, but in the journey. *by Chloe Wasserstrom*

ROB HAMMER

Rob Hammer, a talented travel and documentary photographer, captures some of the world's most iconic locations with his camera. However, his true passion lies in photographing the subtle beauty of the hidden gems he discovers on the road. His latest coffee table book, *Roadside Meditations*, features a stunning collection of these photographs.

The sprawling images in the book allow the viewer's mind to wander as on a long road trip. While the images depict majestic scenes such as storm clouds moving over the desert, they aren't overwhelming and leave room for the viewer to get lost in thought, much like staring out the car window on a long drive.

"There is something so beautiful about the quiet parts of America that never get noticed," Hammer says. He only began to notice them when he was on the road for a different project, traveling the country by car with his husky-shepherd mix named Mojo to photograph barbershops in rural towns across America for a series that is published in *Barbershops of America: Then and Now*. As he drove from one small town to the next, he found serenity in the vast stretches of openness that surrounded him. Wanting to capture that feeling, he began to photograph the scenery. Soon, road trips and the views they afforded became his haven.

"If it were up to me, every human being would be required to make at least one cross-country journey in their lifetime," Hammer says. He believes that if everyone took the time to slow down and appreciate more mundane landscapes across the country that hold just as much potential for beauty, our collective appreciation for America's natural wonders would flourish. The next best thing to embarking on this 45-hour odyssey is picking up a copy of *Roadside Meditations*, available at **robhammerphotography.com.**

TRANQUIL TOPOGRAPHY

These coffee table books guide you through the breathtaking mountains, prairies, canyons, roads, wildlife, and history of the United States, and, of course, take a stop in our great state.

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SANDY LEAPS AND SOARING PEAKS
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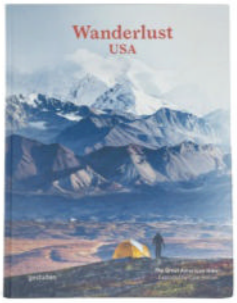
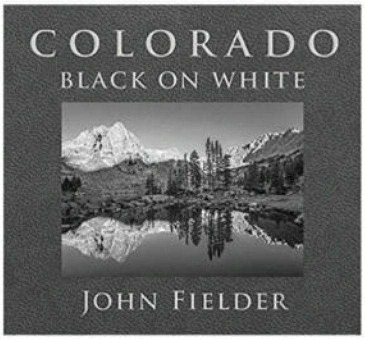
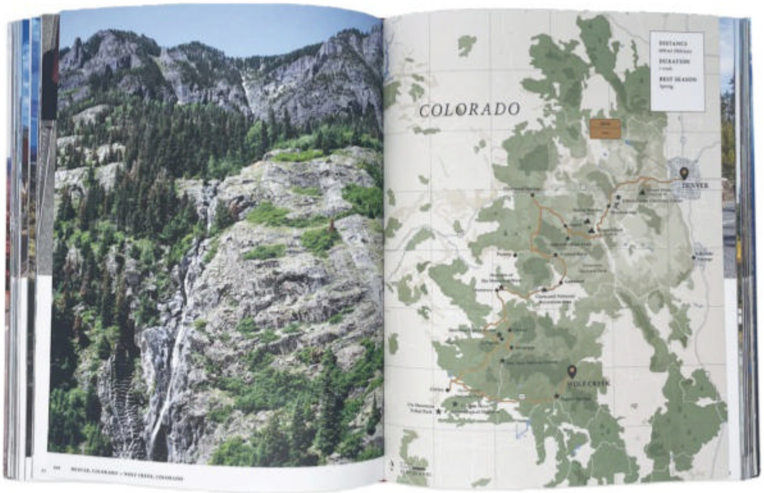

Wanderlust
USA

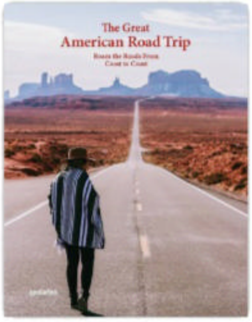
Wanderlust USA by Cam Honan
This stunning book showcases America's best hikes, complete with breathtaking photos, trail details, and a "Good to Know" section with gear tips and fun facts. It features Colorado's Four Pass Loop as the second hike, and Honan suggests visiting Maroon Bells in September for cooler weather and fewer crowds. **us.gestalten.com**


COLORADO
BLACK ON WHITE
JOHN FIELDER

Colorado Black on White by John Fielder
John Fielder's landscape photography of Colorado is strikingly beautiful. His shots focus on sweeping scenes accompanied by a caption that talks about Fielder's personal experiences in this setting. His passion for nature is clear in both his photographs and writing. And recently, the environmentalist donated his life's work to History Colorado in an effort to inspire conservation. **johnfielder.com**

ABOVE THE TREES


COLORADO
DENVER
WOLF CREEK


The Great
American Road Trip
Roam the Roads From
Coast to Coast

The Great American Road Trip: Roam the Roads from Coast to Coast by Gestalten
Flip through the pages to determine which of the 25 road trips appeal to you most: perhaps it is "Maine's Lobster Trail" or the rugged Rocky Mountain route from Denver to Wolf Creek. Whichever it is, the book's stunning photography and planning tips are sure to inspire you to hit the road. **us.gestalten.com**

artist, curator & gallery owner

Unveiling a world of color

Michelle Courier captures the spirit of nature and the vibrancy of a rave in her stunning artwork.

by Sahale Greenwood

In the 1970s, Michelle Courier grew up in a creative, hippie household that movies often seek to capture. With an architect-turned-painter/printmaker father, Courier developed her artistic skills in the third story of their Michigan home, which her father had transformed into an artist studio/playroom. Eventually, she took her talents westward, finding inspiration in the tranquil scenes of the Rocky Mountains and the mesmerizing colors of Lake Tahoe. Today, she owns and curates Westward Gallery on Tennyson Street in Denver, showcasing her own work alongside that of other talented local artists. Attracted by the eye-catching paintings displayed in the gallery's window, I met with Courier to learn more about her journey as an artist and her inspirations. During our conversation, she shared her thoughts on various aspects of her life and career, painting a vivid picture of her creative world.

photography by KATE ROLSTON

Westward Dreams: "I had the best childhood growing up surrounded by a family of artists. My dad, a professional painter, would drive the family out West every year for his art shows in LA, and I would get so excited as I saw the mountains rising up before me. I had been trying to move to Colorado since my childhood, hence the name of the gallery: Westward."

Heart and Soul: The Captivating Beauty of Lake Tahoe: "Really, my heart is Lake Tahoe. I have been every summer since I was 12 and can't get enough. There is nothing like that clarity, the granite, the rock, the cold of the water. It was intimidating to paint at first."

Capturing the Electric Spirit: "My new series is more focused on portraits, which is where I got my start in art. The series focuses on my assistant, who is this total EDM girl. She makes all her costumes and does eccentric makeup for the concerts. She's a piece of art herself, literally. And I really love EDM, too. I am older, but people love me being there; they give me a thumbs-up or a light-up bracelet. I have never felt so accepted. The whole thing is just an experience—the lasers, the music, the people. It's alive."

Embracing Prints: High-Quality Art for Every Budget: "At first, I was opposed to selling prints, but I found this shop that uses archival ink that will never fade and prints on the same canvas I paint on. The prints are really high quality and a great option for someone looking for something more affordable to frame. Where a 36"x36" painting might go for $3,400, a print would be around $900."

Curating with Passion: "The other artists I bring into the gallery are totally different styles from my work. But all my artists take a similar tone: happy, saturated colors, and traditional with an edge. I can tell I want them in my gallery if I get goosebumps when I see their work. I think I am actually happier when I sell one of my artists' works than my own."

Celebrating Art and Community: "On May 5, I will be debuting my new work and celebrating the return of First Friday. There will be a DJ, all the EDM art, the gummy bear pieces, and part of the proceeds will go toward local teen suicide prevention programs."

WESTWARD GALLERY
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westwardgallery.com | @michelletcourier

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An ovation to the opera

As Opera Colorado's 40th season draws to a close, we reflect on the company's remarkable contributions to Denver's vibrant performing arts scene through its captivating storytelling and influential educational programs.

Opera is a multifaceted art form, seamlessly blending singing, dancing, and acting within the framework of intricate and visually stunning sets. Greg Carpenter, Opera Colorado's general and artistic director, describes opera as "all the best art forms put into one." For Carpenter, fostering connections with the community is paramount, particularly through educational initiatives and engaging with the next generation of artists. Under his leadership, the number of children served annually by Opera Colorado has risen from 10,000 to over 45,000, a testament to the company's commitment to arts education. This achievement is made possible through programs brought directly to schools, as well as performances and workshops hosted at the opera house.

Opera Colorado continually explores innovative methods to introduce new audiences to the enchanting world of opera. The recent presentation of Moravec & Campbell's *The Shining*, only the second production of its kind nationwide, attracted 2,000 new ticket buyers—over 200 of which returned the following spring, Carpenter says. Through a diverse repertoire that combines traditional opera classics with more contemporary narratives, Opera Colorado enhances the rich tapestry of Denver's performing arts scene.

Serving as a cornerstone of Denver's cultural community since 1983, Opera Colorado continues its history of excellence in the upcoming 2023–24 season, featuring three new productions. Carpenter expresses particular excitement for Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman*, brought to life for the first time since 1997 with a brand-new production in early 2024. DLM

OPERA COLORADO
Ellie Caulkins
Opera House
1385 Curtis St.
303.468.2030
operacolorado.org

SPOTLIGHT ON MUST-SEE THEATER PRODUCTIONS

The Book Club Play
THROUGH MAY 18
In this refreshingly witty comedy, a documentary filmmaker scrutinizes a passionate book club, unveiling hilarious and dramatic shifts in group dynamics. This lively comedy brims with literary references, delighting bibliophiles. **arvadacenter.org**

The Sound of Music
THROUGH AUG. 19
An iconic Broadway classic, this musical captures the inspiring true story of the Trapp Family Singers, weaving together themes of courage, love, and family, leaving audiences both captivated and moved. Acclaimed for its unforgettable melodies and powerful narrative, this timeless masterpiece continues to resonate with audiences. **bdtstage.com**

Les Misérables
MAY 10–21
This award-winning musical portrays a gripping tale of love, loss, and redemption set against 19th-century France's backdrop, capturing the indomitable human spirit in its unforgettable melodies and compelling characters. **thebuelltheatre.com**

Memphis
MAY 19–JUNE 17
This vibrant musical inspired by DJ legend Dewey Phillips follows Huey, a white man in 1950s Memphis, as he champions black musicians, particularly talented singer Felicia, defying societal norms and celebrating music's unifying power. **townhallartscenter.org**

WRITTEN BY JULIA RUBLE; PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF MATTHEW STAVER

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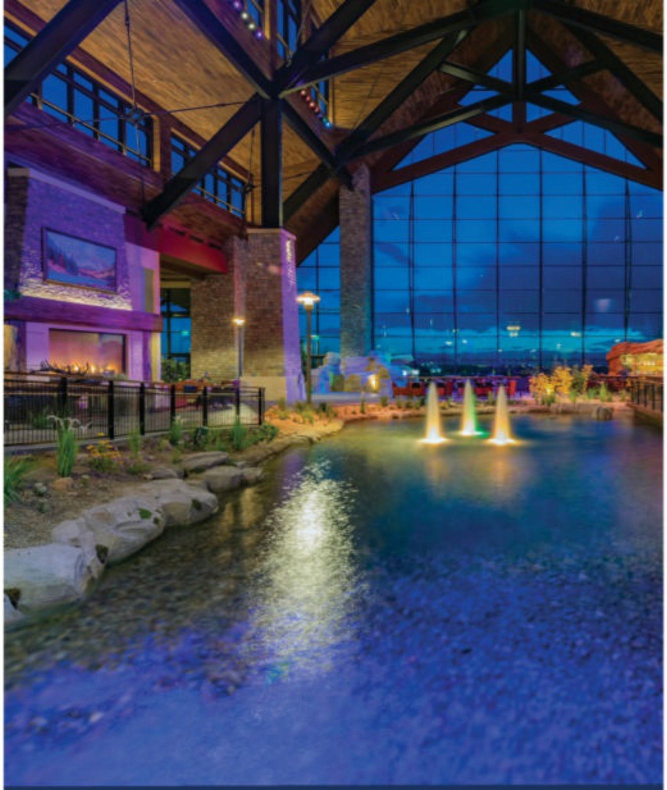

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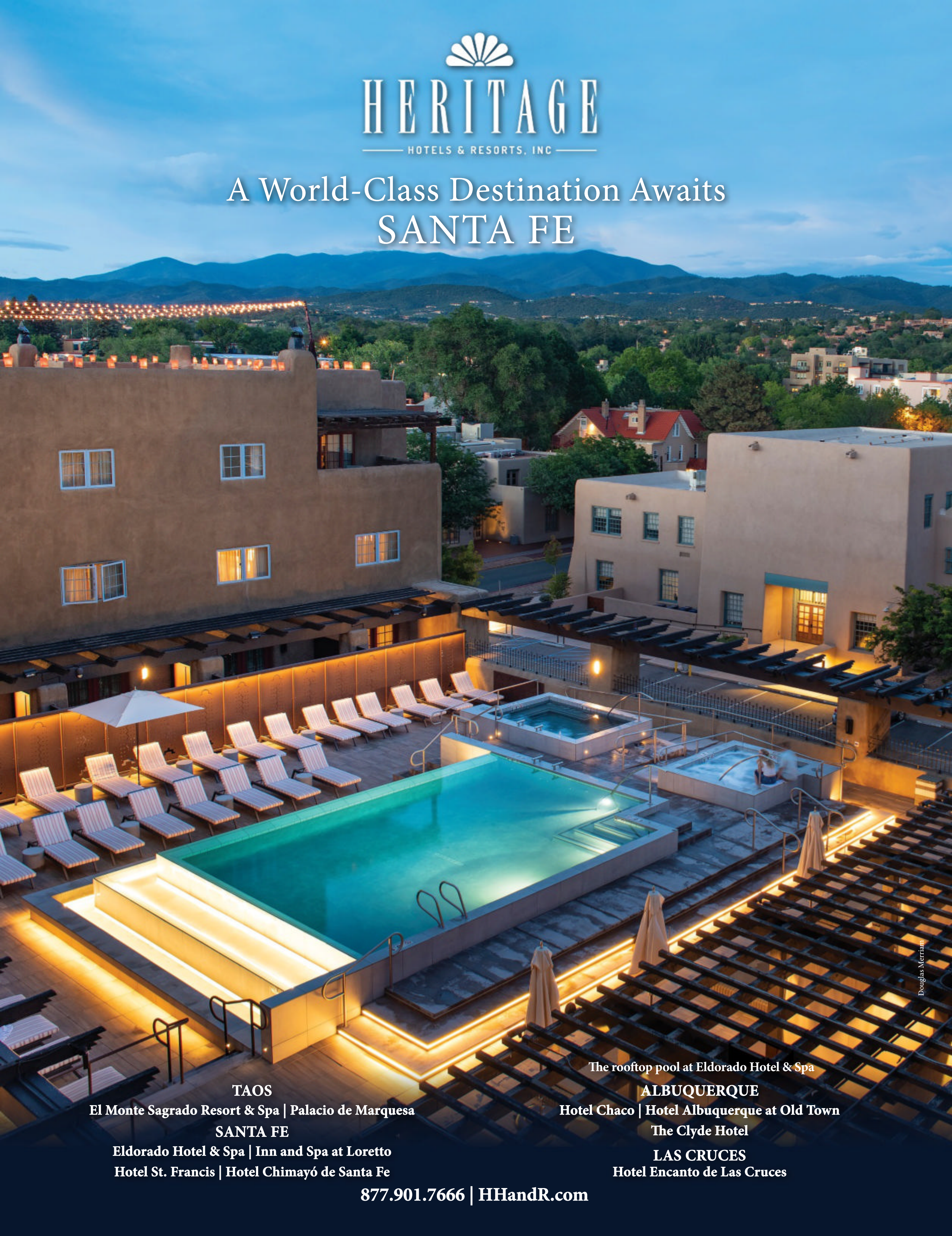

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taste

SALAD'S STAR INGREDIENT
Chop Shop Casual Urban Eatery shares three salad dressing recipes to elevate your greens, p. 44.

Cosmic pastries

Embark on an edible odyssey as **BLACK BOX BAKERY** launches in Edgewater Public Market, presenting a delectable and visually stunning assortment of laminated pastries. Arielle Israel, Ty Webb, and Megan Read, the close-knit trio behind this baking venture, have skillfully merged their passion for space and culinary artistry to create extraordinary croissants that go beyond the conventional.

Savor the Lavender Space Dreams, a striking purple croissant filled with lavender yogurt crémeux and blueberry lavender jam. Each bite reveals 27 carefully crafted butter layers, a testament to the bakers' commitment to perfecting lamination using made-in-house butter blocks. Boldly embracing experimentation, Black Box Bakery delivers a galaxy of taste sensations in their constantly evolving pastry selection. Leave the ordinary behind—indulge in surprising flavor combinations that intrigue and delight. To complete the experience, your pastries come nestled in a sleek black box, a tribute to the bakery's name and a tempting invitation to discover the delicacies within. **@blackbox_bakery**

WRITTEN BY STEPHANIE WILSON; PHOTOGRAPHY: COURTESY BLACK BOX BAKERY

Fox and friend

At **Blanco Cocina + Cantina**, the buzzy Mexican spot in the 9+Co. development that's part of restaurateur Sam Fox's eponymous empire, the buzzy margaritas come with an extra shot of happy. *by Stephanie Wilson*

DODGE'S CADILLAC

INGREDIENTS

- **¼ oz. fresh lime juice**
- **3 oz. fresh-made sour mix**
- **¾ oz. Combier L'Original D'Orange Liqueur or Cointreau**
- **1½ oz. Herradura Silver**
- **½ oz. Grand Marnier**

Optional:
Mixed coarse salt for rim

DIRECTIONS

Add ingredients into a shaker with ice and shake. Strain over fresh ice into glass (with optional rim). Float ½ oz. of Grand Marnier on top of margarita. Garnish with ½ orange slice.

> "Sam Fox named this drink after one of his best friends—a guy nicknamed Dodge, who always drank a margarita with Don Julio and a Grand Marnier float. We've since changed the tequila we used to make it, but its origin story remains the same." —*Isabella Hagaman*

ASK THE BARTENDER

Isabella Hagaman

What are the key elements of a great margarita?
"Fresh lime juice, agave, a silver tequila, and a good liqueur."

Why silver (blanco) tequila vs. a reposado or añejo?
"It pairs a bit better with the flavor profile. Your reposados and añejos are a little bit on the sweeter side, and traditional margaritas are more tart than sweet, so silver tequila works best."

How important is the shape of the glassware for margaritas?
"Not very. The more important factor for these cocktails is the temperature of the glass—is it room temperature or is it chilled? I definitely prefer chilled."

Have you noticed any cocktail trends on the rise?
"Ranch water! It's just tequila, lime juice, and club soda—like a twist on a tequila soda. Instead of regular club soda, we use Topo Chico, which changes it up a little bit."

How did the Dodge's Cadillac get its name?
"Sam Fox named it after one of his best friends—a guy nicknamed Dodge who always drank a margarita with Don Julio and a Grand Marnier float. We've changed the tequila we use to make it, but the original recipe called for Don Julio. 'Cadillac' is the name we give to our higher-shelf cocktails."

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blancococinacantina.com

photography by JAKE HOLSCHUH

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Dressing to impress

Lettuce not forget that it's the zesty touches that make a salad truly memorable. **Chop Shop Casual Urban Eatery** dishes out three recipes to transform your greens from simple to stellar.

by Sahale Greenwood

Grapefruit Sesame Vinaigrette
Champagne Vinaigrette
White Balsamic Vinaigrette

> "Don't be afraid to add more oil or water when making a vinaigrette to adjust thickness. Xanthan gum is our great secret ingredient at Chop Shop Casual Urban Eatery, giving a thicker consistency to our vinaigrettes—a very little goes a long way!"
>
> *—Chef Clint Wangsnes, owner, Chop Shop Casual Urban Eatery*

RECIPES

Champagne Vinaigrette

Blend together **1 large shallot**, **2 garlic cloves**, **1 Tbsp. Dijon mustard**, **3 dashes Tabasco**, **¼ cup honey**, **1½ cup champagne vinegar**, **1 Tbsp. sea salt**, and **2 tsp. fresh cracked pepper**. Slowly emulsify with **1 cup light olive oil**. Once emulsified, add **3 Tbsp. fresh chopped parsley** and pulse three times.

Grapefruit Sesame Vinaigrette

Soak **1 cone piloncillo** (**3 Tbsp. brown sugar** could be substituted) in **¾ cup grapefruit juice** and **½ cup white wine vinegar** while prepping all other ingredients. Add **1 shallot**, **1 Tbsp. Sriracha**, **2 oz. pickled ginger** (sushi style, natural sugar is best), **½ oz. fresh ginger** (peeled and chopped), **1½ Tbsp. sea salt**, and **1½ Tbsp. fresh cracked pepper** to a blender and blend until well incorporated. Slowly add **½ cup sesame oil** and **1 cup light olive oil** until thick. Lastly, pulse in **¼ cup chopped cilantro** and **¼ cup green onion** (thinly sliced).

White Balsamic Vinaigrette

Toast **1 Tbsp. sumac**, mince **3 garlic clove** and brunoise **½ cup shallot**, and then place in a bowl with **2 Tbsp. Dijon mustard**, **2 Tbsp. Worcestershire sauce**, **1 Tbsp. Tabasco**, **1 cup white balsamic vinegar**, **3 Tbsp. honey**, **1 Tbsp. fresh cracked pepper**, and **2 Tbsp. sea salt**. Mix well. Next, emulsify in **3 cups light olive oil**. Once smooth, add **2 Tbsp. chopped fresh parsley** and pulse three times.

TIP: Gather all your ingredients and tools before you start any recipe. This ensures you have everything you need at hand.

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Living on lobster time

A new lobster sensation rolled into town to satisfy our crustacean cravings. *by Sahale Greenwood*

Colorado may be a landlocked state, but we needn't feel bereft of the briny pleasures of fresh Atlantic lobster. The Cousins Maine Lobster food truck—a mobile mecca for all things lobster—has rolled into town, bringing the sweet succulent tastes of the East Coast to the Mile High City. The *Shark Tank*-backed brand has put together a menu brimming with an array of tantalizing choices: traditional Maine and Connecticut lobster rolls, a playful lobster tail & tots combo, and an unexpectedly divine lobster grilled cheese that's a testament to the age-old adage that everything is better with cheddar

Cousins helpfully posts the truck's schedule online two weeks out so you can plan accordingly. If the crustacean mobile isn't rolling through your neighborhood anytime soon, don't fret—Denver has a bevvy of places that can satisfy your butter-drizzled cravings. Maine Shack piles East Coast charm a Mile High with the Lobsterado—a lobster-topped lobster roll. Elsewhere in town, lobster rolls make an appearance on menus at Water Grill, Steuben's, Blue Island Oyster Bar & Seafood, Manzo Lobster and Oyster Bar, Max Gill and Grill, Rock N Lobster Roll, and the ever-eloquent Stoic and Genuine.

➡ cousinsmainelobster.com

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happy hour

SIDE PONY

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sideponydenver.com

Few things forge friendships faster than sweating through a shared workout—except, perhaps, unwinding over a drink together afterward. If you, like me, find camaraderie among fellow fitness enthusiasts, prepare to meet your new favorite watering hole: Side Pony, brought to us by Angela Neri, the visionary behind LoDo's "fancy dive" Pony Up. Conveniently nestled on West Colfax between fitness studio Duality and med spa Original Gem, Side Pony is an all-day cafe and bar, serving coffee and croissants by morning and cocktails and charcuterie by night—with an extra-long three-hour happy hour in between offering discounted drinks, small bites, and wine served in uncomplicated digs.

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news BITES

SEOULFUL ESCAPADES

A wave of tantalizing Korean eateries has taken the city by storm, spearheaded by J.W. Lee's Seoul Hospitality Group. Allow us to guide you through a few must-visit locales:

○ **Seoul Mandoo** This is the spot for traditional street-food-style Korean dumplings made by hand—gigantic, fist-sized doughy wonders packed with colossal flavor. **seoulmandoo.com**

○ **Mono Mono** This Korean fried chicken joint (with four locations) uses an Asian frying technique that transforms the skin into a thin, crackly crust that delivers a satisfying sweet-spicy crunch that's rich, airy, and addictive. **monomonokfc.com**

○ **Thank Sool Pocha K-Pub** Get a taste of Korean nightlife culture and explore a menu full of items not yet embraced by Western culture—spicy pork feet, steamed sea snail, and bbq beef intestine among them. **thanksool.com**

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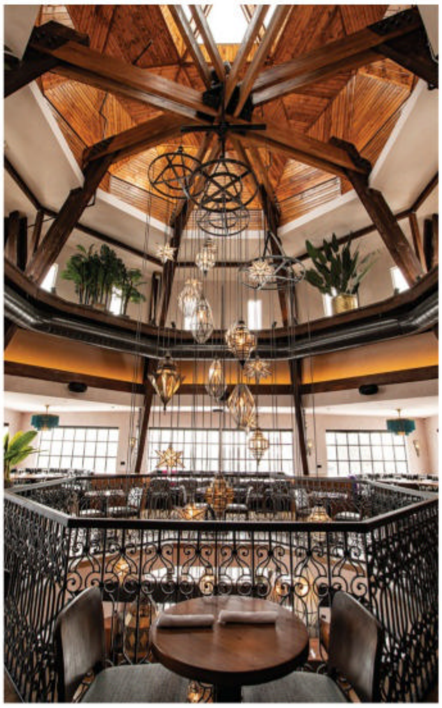
ON THE MENU *Clockwise from top center:* 18 oz. bone-in ribeye steak; peach margarita; guacamole fresco; mezcalita; blackened Chilean sea bass; adobo fingerling potatoes. *Opposite page, from left:* Artisanal lights by Ático Decoración; lobster + shrimp enchiladas; culinary director Chef Johnny Curiel.

photography by TOM MCCORKLE



Like a good neighbor

Centennial turns out to welcome **My Neighbor Felix** and its upscale Mexican fare.

by Stephanie Wilson

My Neighbor Felix, the popular pan-Mexican restaurant and bar from Lotus Concepts with outposts in LoHi and Boulder, opened its third location just off I-25 in Centennial in March—and it's been absolutely bustling and packed ever since.

This despite its expanse. The 11,500-square-foot multilevel space is a sartorially suited sentinel of taste with a design aesthetic channeling Mexico City's vibrant energy. Artwork by Erick Garcia Gomez, artisanal lighting fixtures created by Ático Decoración in San Miguel de Allende, a two-story faux greenery wall installation by Lalé Florals, Aztec and Mayan motif touches, a glowing red neon "Muy Yum" sign, and a towering central bar stocked with more than a hundred tequilas and mezcals create an atmosphere that's both sophisticated yet unpretentious, lively, and fun.

But the true draw of My Neighbor Felix lies in its culinary offerings. Chef Johnny Curiel curates a menu that's rich, flavorful, and true to its roots, which spans all seven regions of Mexico. Mindfully sourced, local ingredients lay the foundation for dishes that are as delectable as they are honest.

Felix's Secret Key Margarita

The dishes at the Centennial location balance familiar favorites from the LoHi menu with more upscale options tailored for the Denver Tech Center crowd.

The expanded grill and seafood selections are a highlight of the menu, with signature dishes like braised short rib enchiladas and an 18 oz. bone-in ribeye with an ancho chile crust (served with your choice of side and highly recommend you choose the poblano mash), plus expanded fish and seafood options, including enchiladas filled with butter-poached lobster and black tiger shrimp and topped with tomatillo salsa verde, cilantro crema, pickled red onion, and smoked salt.

The flavors from the kitchen are perfectly complemented by the ones crafted at the towering central bar, where the cocktail menu is heavy on margaritas with interesting twists. The signature Felix's Secret Key margarita, with Herradura double barrel-aged reposado, agave nectar, fresh orange and lime, and a habanero rim, is served on the rock—a single cube bearing the mark of the signature skeleton key that signals common access to exploration. Stop by this spring to explore the new 2,200-square-foot patio complete with water fountains, cabanas, and an outdoor bar. DLM

MY NEIGHBORHOOD FELIX | 7209 S. Clinton St., Centennial | 720.736.8616 | myneighborfelix.com

FOOD
Pan-Mexican cuisine made with fresh, natural ingredients sourced locally whenever possible.

DRINKS
Try the Mezcalita: mezcal, Cointreau, fresh lime, beet juice, and agave nectar.

DECOR
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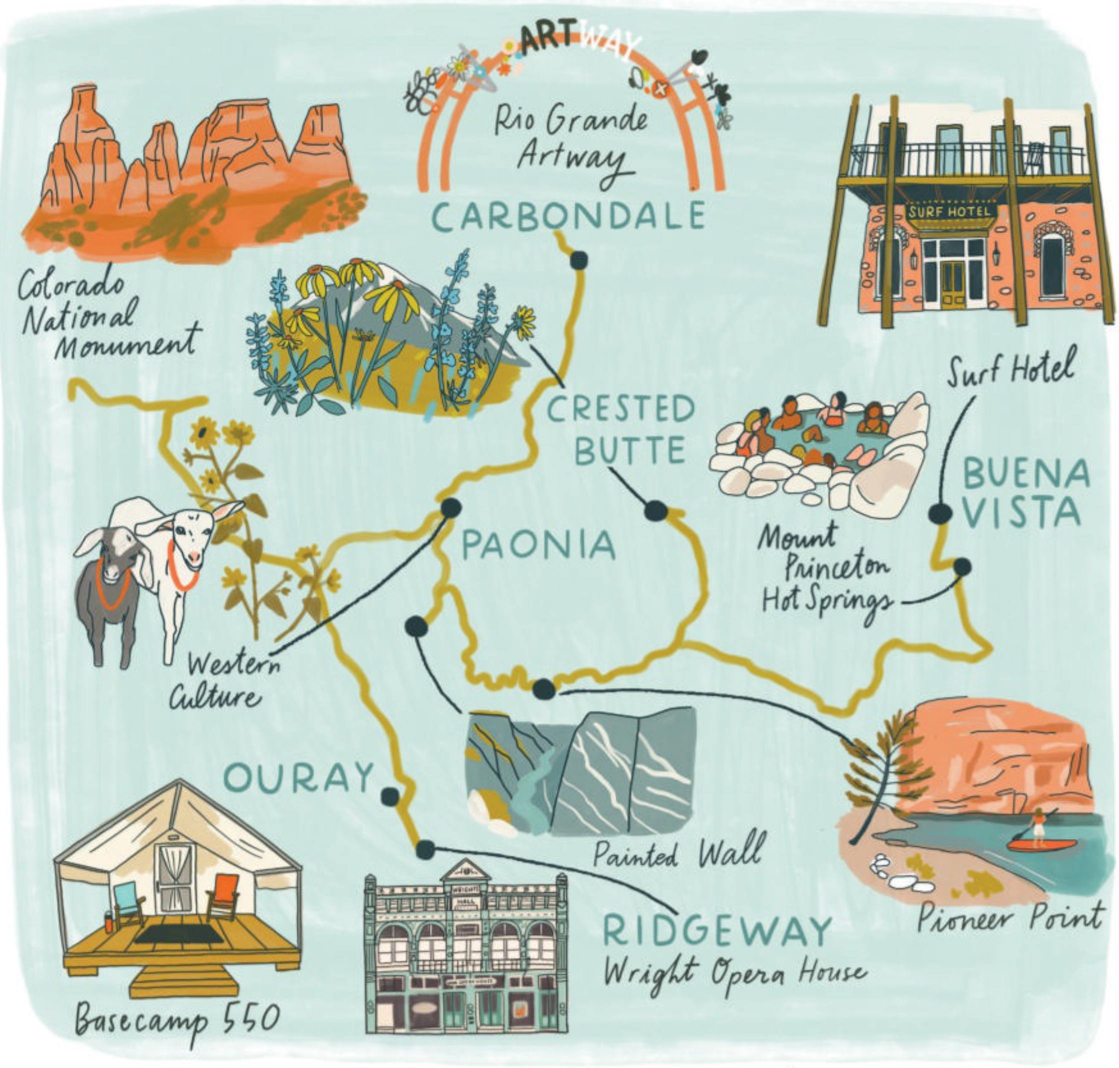
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the ultimate Summer Road Trip

Join us as we embark on a journey through some of Colorado's most picturesque destinations, including Ouray, Ridgway, Carbondale, Crested Butte, and Buena Vista. We'll guide you through where to stay, what to do, and what to try in each location, making sure you experience the greatest Colorado escape.

Whether you're looking to soak in hot springs, explore mountain trails, or indulge in delicious local cuisine, we've got you covered. From the charming streets of Carbondale to the rugged peaks of Crested Butte, this road trip will take you on an unforgettable adventure through some of Colorado's most beautiful and unique landscapes.

So buckle up, grab a map, and get ready for the best summer road trip yet.

BY ROBYN GRIGGS LAWRENCE

illustration by ALY MILLER DESIGNS

South Main

Buena Vista

Get there

From Denver, head west on US-285 to Buena Vista, a charming town located at the base of the Collegiate Peaks. The picturesque mountain town is known for outdoor recreation and its charming downtown area.

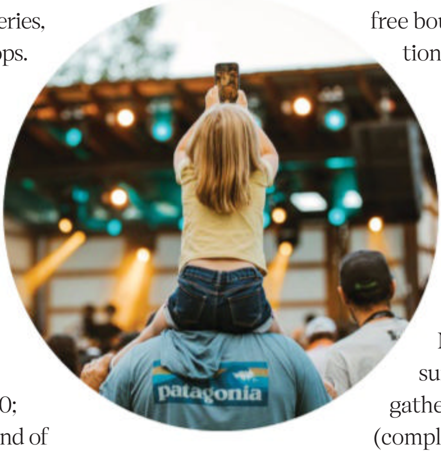
Flanked by the majestic Collegiate Peaks and the mighty Arkansas River in Chalk Creek Canyon, Buena Vista more than lives up to its name—which means "beautiful view"—and draws adventurous spirits for its unparalleled whitewater rafting, hiking, and mountain biking, as well as a solid live music scene and fun festivals all summer long.

Buena Vista's historic downtown is home to buildings dating to its heyday as a railroad town in the 1880s and 1890s, housing art galleries, a book store, and eclectic local shops. Learn more about Buena Vista's history at the museum in the **Historic Chaffee County Courthouse**, built in 1882, and check out nearby **St. Elmo**, one of the West's best-preserved ghost towns (the general store is open for business in the summer). Buena Vista has been celebrating its Old West and mining heritage during **Gold Rush Days** since 1950; this year's festivities are the weekend of August 12–13 (buenavistaheritage.org).

For a more recent blast from the past, catch a movie at the **Comanche Drive-In**, one of only 321 drive-ins left in the United States. A family-run business since 1967, the drive-in has updated digital sound and claims to serve the best popcorn ever (comanchedrivein.com).

Wander the streets of **South Main** and you'll find a bevy of bustling shops offering mountain bike rentals, funky pottery, handmade jewelry, adventure gear, and other distinctive mementos. Perched on the Arkansas River, the **Surf Hotel & Chateau**'s stately property surveys the frothy whitewater park at the heart of the walkable South Main neighborhood (southmainco.com). In this mixed-use community, developed atop a former landfill, charming architecture and tranquil ambiance fuse and adventure is always a mere jaunt away. Take a stroll riverside, ride your cruiser bike downtown, try your hand at rock climbing in the free boulder garden, or explore the collection of artist-owned galleries.

South Main delivers top-notch entertainment, with sold-out concerts and free music events at **The Beach** (a riverfront concert venue known as BV's outdoor living room) and a summer concert series on **The Lawn**, located in front of the Surf Hotel on South Main Town Square. Filling out the summer calendar are a plethora of gatherings, including CKS Paddlefest (complete with a kayak rodeo) and the Seven Peaks music and camping fest.



Summer on The Lawn

COURTESY SOUTH MAIN CO.

Buena Eats

The tiny town is home to a bunch of acclaimed eateries, starting with the **Surf Hotel's Wesley & Rose Lobby Bar**, open nightly for dinner and Sunday mornings for brunch. Swing by on a Monday for half-priced wine and Arrowpoint Cattle Co. Butcher's Cut specials served alongside intimate live music performances brought to you by Coletrain Music Academy in partnership with South Main Arts & Park.

Head downtown and grab a smoothie, breakfast sandwich, or bowl to start your day right at **The Blend**—but get there early. This place is popular. **theblendbv.com**

Elkhorn Pizzeria is so beloved by both locals and visitors that sometimes it has to close early because it runs out of pies. **elkhornpizzeria.com**

For healthy, made-from-scratch sandwiches, burritos, soups, and bowls, **House Rock Kitchen** is the place. Plus they've got four flavors of kombucha on tap. **houserockkitchen.com**

Cheese lovers! **Jumpin' Good Goat Dairy** and creamery is the place to find a variety of creative artisan goat cheeses made using uniquely adapted old-world cheesemaking traditions, plus accompaniments including honey, jams, and salamis. **jumpingoodgoats.com**

Rest easy

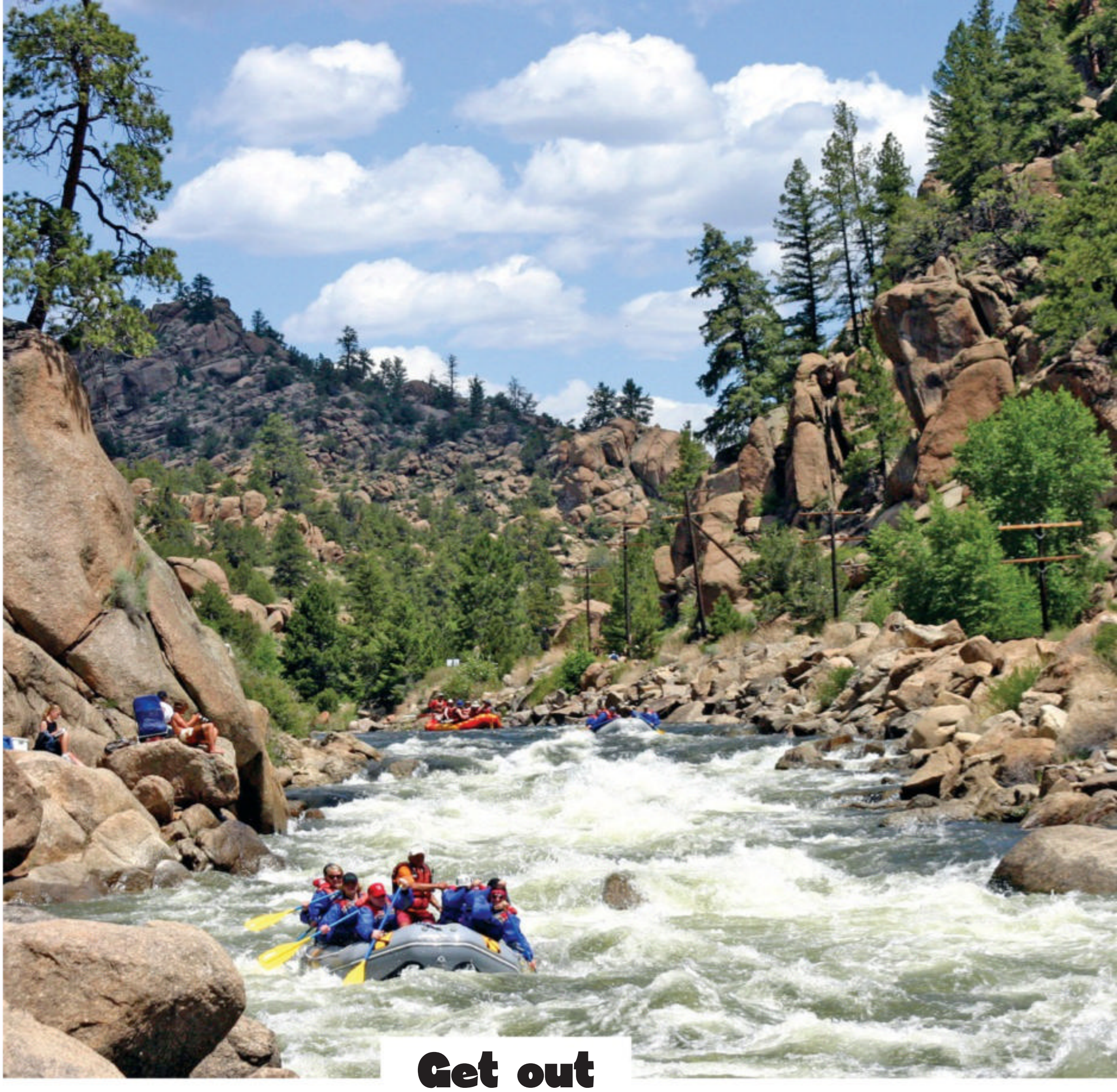
In this adventure playground, **The Surf Hotel & Chateau** emerges as a sanctuary where artful design meets boundless outdoor exploration. On the banks of the Arkansas River in charming South Main, the sustainably built property is a comfortable, elegant, and timeless new hotel with 42 rooms featuring canopy beds, clawfoot tubs, and stunning mountain views from New Orleans-style balconies. **surfhotel.com**

With 13 thoughtfully designed and curated rooms, **The Inn at Railroad + Main** is an elegant boutique hotel in a fully restored 1800s building in the heart of downtown Buena Vista. **theinnbv.com**

Surrounded by the San Isabel National Forest, **Cottonwood Hot Springs Inn & Spa** features some of the purest geothermal waters in the country. Disconnect and relax in this rustic, WiFi-free getaway. Lodge rooms, dorms, and campsites are available for overnight stays. **cotton-wood-hot-springs.com**

With six geothermal hot spring pools (temperatures ranging from 70 to 120 degrees), a cold plunge, and a 400-foot water slide, **Mount Princeton Hot Springs** is a 70-acre resort with incredible views of Mount Princeton's Chalk Cliffs. Lodging and spa services, including deep-tissue massage with CBD cream, are also available. **mtprinceton.com**

BROWNS CANYON, SCOTT PETERSON; BUENA VISTA PUMP TRACK



Get out

South Main's crowning glory is its proximity to **The River Park**. The whitewater park project transformed the Arkansas River into an unparalleled community asset. In-channel enhancements create prime kayaking conditions, serene fishing pools, and sun-soaked beaches. The River Park hosts kayaking and stand-up paddleboarding contests, inviting the public to test their mettle on man-made waves.

Top, Rafting in Browns Canyon; *above,* Buena Vista Pump Track

That's but one small stretch of the **Arkansas River**, which offers over 100 miles of whitewater rafting and kayaking in Colorado. Starting north of Buena Vista, extreme kayakers and rafters run Pine Creek, one of the most challenging class V rapids in the state. For a tamer yet still thrilling run, join River Runners for a three-hour rafting trip through Browns Canyon, where the torrents are high enough to be entertaining without crossing into the slightly terrifying territory (whitewater.net). Most of the area's plentiful rafting companies offer trips from late spring to early fall.

Looking for a more leisurely way to get on the water? **Twin Lakes** or **Cottonwood Lake**, both less than a half hour from Buena Vista, are great for lake kayaking, canoeing, and stand-up paddle boarding.

Back on land, the 24 miles of county roads linking Buena Vista and Salida are prime grounds for road bikers, while mountain bikers are wont to punish themselves on Cottonwood, Poncha, Monarch, and Independence passes. Before you hit either the trails or the road, brush up your skills at the **Buena Vista Pump Track** practice park or the freshly built **Junk Yard Bike Park**, where classic autos have been repurposed as launch pads and obstacles.

LYDIA STERN

Crested Butte

Perched high in the Elk Mountains at 8,909' elevation, Crested Butte—named for the 12,162' peak that towers over the town—is considered Colorado's wildflower capital. Mass development and chain stores haven't ruined this small burg, which some people call "a surf town in the mountains" for its laid-back vibe.

The historic downtown is walkable and approachable, with local shops and curiosities like the license plate-covered house at Fourth Street and Elk Avenue and knight and dragon sculptures at Seventh Street and Red Lady Avenue. **Rooted Apothecary**, a herbalist's dream, trades in wildcrafted lotions, potions, and holistic products made with plants foraged in the Gunnison Valley (rooted-apothecary.com). In the Elk Avenue storefront, you can source natural tinctures, organic serums, herbal salves, loose-leaf teas, soy wax candles, and nontoxic skin care creams infused with potent medicinal herbs and plants to aid in natural healing.

The state-of-the-art **Center for the Arts** in Town Park offers live concerts, dance, theater, and film, with free outdoor concerts every Monday during the summer (crestedbuttearts.org).

Get there From Buena Vista, take US-24 E. and continue onto US-285 S. to Poncha Springs, where you'll pick up US-50 W. to Gunnison. Take a right onto CO-135 N. and follow the road into Crested Butte.

Fuel up

McGill's opens early, so you can grab a hearty homemade breakfast and wash it down with a bloody Mary or mimosa. If you're not an early riser, not to worry—breakfast is served all day. **mcgillscrestedbutte.com** **Camp 4 Coffee** is the local roaster everyone loves. The *Denver Post* says it's the best coffee in Colorado. Two locations with license plate exteriors offer walk-in service and outdoor seating, and a coffee cart is open for the summer at the Ohio Creek Road turn in nearby Gunnison. **camp4coffee.com**

The Breadery

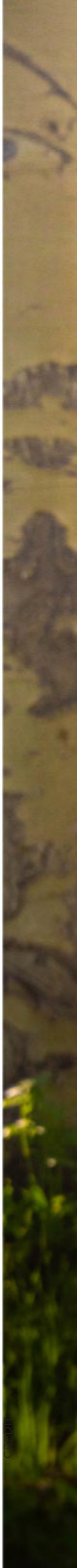
A 60-year-old starter named Trisha is the secret to **The Breadery's** naturally leavened sourdough pizza and bread. **breaderycb.com** **Soupçon**, a French and American bistro in a cozy mining cabin, offers a tasting menu with delicacies like salmon and caviar, Colorado beef short rib, and dark chocolate silk cake. **soupconcb.com** And calling itself "a sunny place for shady people," The Eldo is Crested Butte's only locally owned craft brewery with bar food, live music, and a deck. **eldobrewery.com**

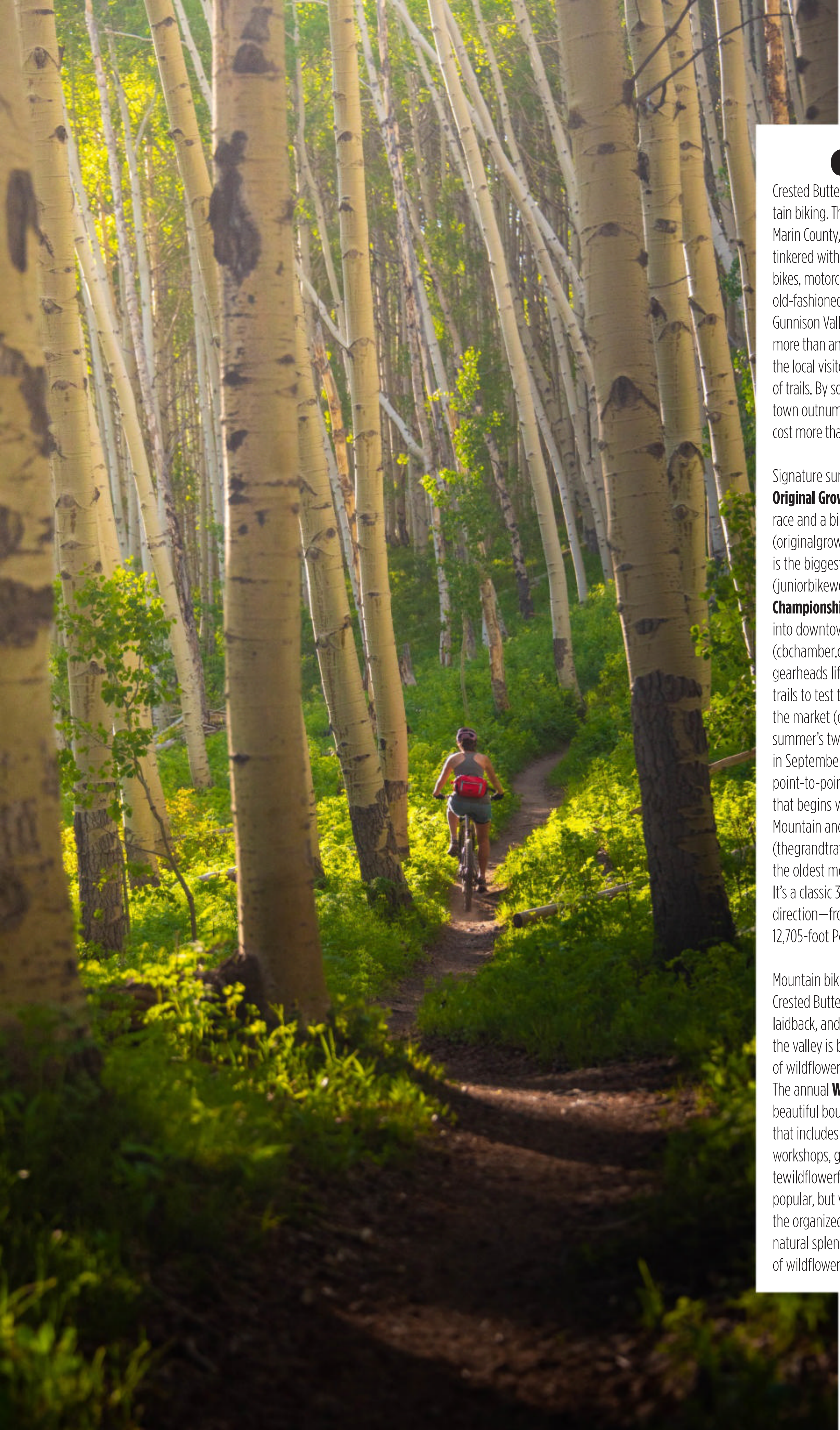
Rest easy

On the town's main drag, **Public House** is Crested Butte's swankiest saloon turned boutique hotel, where king-sized beds, walk-in closets, and steam showers meet the spirit of rock 'n' roll. Inspired by iconic venues like San Francisco's Fillmore Auditorium and Manhattan's Beacon Theater, this Colorado haunt boasts three lofts that'll have you dreaming of trailblazing tunes and rebellious riffs. **publichousecb.com**

Wander into the heart of town, and you'll stumble upon **Scarp Ridge Lodge**, a Wild West wonderland reimagined for the modern-day adventurer. This former saloon has traded swinging doors for reclaimed iron and solid amenities, including a saltwater pool, rooftop hot tub, and oxygen-enriched air system. With six eclectic guest rooms, a chef-prepared breakfast, and an impressive array of libations, it's your perfect mountain retreat. During ski season, a snowcat sits on standby to whisk you away to powder paradise. **elevenexperience.com**

Nestled next door is the storied **Sopris House**, a historical hideaway where the Spritzer Bar once quenched the thirst of rowdy gold miners. Today, you'll find four beautifully revamped bedrooms, a private courtyard, and a media room alongside charming relics like a buffalo head and tin ceiling. Plus, an outdoor copper hot tub and sauna invite you to unwind after a day of conquering the trails. **elevenexperience.com**





DANICA BONA

Get out

Crested Butte is arguably the birthplace of mountain biking. The sport originated in the 1970s in both Marin County, CA, and Crested Butte. The CB cohorts tinkered with their bikes, modifying a mix of road bikes, motorcycle parts, junkers, and some good old-fashioned flair. Today, Crested Butte and the Gunnison Valley have over 750 miles of singletrack—more than anywhere else in the world, according to the local visitor's board—and more than 150 miles of trails. By some estimates, the number of bikes in town outnumbers the locals, and 25% of those bikes cost more than their owner's car.

Signature summertime events include the **Original Growler**, an endurance mountain bike race and a big ole party wrapped into one (originalgrowler.com). In June, **Junior Bike Week** is the biggest kids' bike party on the planet (juniorbikeweek.com), and the **Chainless World Championships** sends gravity-fed racers flying into downtown from the top of **Kebler Pass** (cbchamber.com). In August, **Outerbike** gives gearheads lift-serve access to cross-country trails to test the latest and greatest bikes on the market (outerbike.com). Rounding out the summer's two-wheeling events are two events in September: **Grand Traverse Mountain Bike**, a point-to-point race from Aspen to Crested Butte that begins with a 3,000-foot ascent up Aspen Mountain and doesn't get any easier from there (thegrandtraverse.org); and **Pearl Pass Tour**, the oldest mountain biking event in the world. It's a classic 38-mile off-road ride in the other direction—from Crested Butte to Aspen over the 12,705-foot Pearl Pass (cbklunkers.com).

Mountain biking not your thing? You'll still love Crested Butte—everyone does. It's beautiful, laidback, and totally charming. Not to mention, the valley is blanketed with a kaleidoscope of wildflowers during the summer months. The annual **Wildflower Festival** celebrates the beautiful bounty through 10 days of programming that includes guided hikes, art and photography workshops, garden tours, and more (crestedbuttewildflowerfestival.com). The fest is extremely popular, but you don't have to participate in any of the organized activities to relish the beauty of the natural splendor. Hikers swoon over the vast fields of wildflowers along the 4.5-mile Walrod Loop Trail.

True Nature Healing Arts

Carbondale

Nestled at the foot of the towering Mount Sopris, where the Crystal and Roaring Fork Rivers converge not far from Aspen, Carbondale has a reputation as one of the country's best towns and accolades from *National Geographic* and *Outside* magazines to back that up. Climbers, hikers, fly fishers, and creative types alike flock to this funky enclave with a hippie past, where arts and music thrive and sustainability is a way of life.

Carbondale Clay Center

As a shining star among Colorado's 30 Creative Districts, Carbondale graces the state's Creative Corridor—a captivating 331-mile voyage through Western Colorado's rural towns from Carbondale to Salida. The town's artistic devotion is palpable along its historic Main Street, where revitalized Wild West edifices house lively galleries and charming boutiques displaying local talent.

Downtown's heart, **The Launchpad** melds performing arts studios, a fine art gallery, an inviting promenade, and Artique—a quirky store offering a curated assortment (launchpadcarbondale.com). Explore the enchanting **Betty Jane Schuss Memorial Gardens**, home to edible and medicinal landscaping and community gardens, a small amphitheater, communal spaces, and a sculpture garden. For hands-on creativity, visit **Carbondale Clay Center** at Main Street's east end (carbondaleclay.org).

A haven at Mount Sopris' base, **True Nature Healing Arts** serves as a spiritual playground for chakra-aligning experiences and soul-reviving retreats. Daily classes in yoga, movement, and meditation, a luxury spa and boutique, and an Ayurvedic-inspired café lure visitors, while the antique décor hailing from India, Morocco, and Bali enchants. The heart of the center is its five-element peace garden, open daily from dawn till dusk, featuring a hand-cut sandstone labyrinth and a reflexology path adorned with a therapeutic mosaic of stones (truenaturehealingarts.com).

Venture further to discover immersive farm stays, enlightening tours, and delectable locally grown fare. For a deeper connection with sustainable practices, visit **Sustainable Settings**, a working ranch offering appointment-based tours (sustainablesettings.org).

Get there

From Crested Butte, head south on CO-135 to Gunnison, a quaint town surrounded by beautiful natural scenery. From Gunnison, take CO-133 to Carbondale in the Roaring Fork Valley.

CARBONDALE CLAY CENTER; DAVID WHIPPLE ON UNSPLASH

Rest easy

Snuggle with an adorable alpaca at **Cedar Ridge Ranch**, then extend your stay in one of the private yurts or safari tents nestled within the property. For those who prefer a more traditional touch, cabins and farmhouses are available too. One of the Valley's venerable horse facilities, it's the ideal destination for equestrians. While you're there, indulge in farm tours, yoga, fiber felting classes, horseback riding lessons, and don't miss the farm store offering fresh pork, eggs, alpaca fiber, and apparel. **cedarridgeranch.com**

With 13 log cabins, a one-bedroom loft apartment, glamping wagons, and a three-bedroom ranch house on 36 acres overlooking the Crystal River, **Avalanche Ranch Cabins & Hotsprings** in nearby Redstone is a great place for the whole family to hike, fish, play horseshoes and volleyball, and soak in three natural hot springs pools. **avalancheranch.com**

A 1902 Tudor Revival building furnished with arts and crafts décor, the **Redstone Inn** offers a variety of spacious rooms and suites as well as single-bed dormer rooms. The clock tower room offers incredible views of the Roaring Fork Valley. **redstoneinn.com**

The world's only inn housed in a working distillery, The Distillery Inn has five luxury suites with private balconies, personalized minibars and martini bars, and cocktail delivery from the Marble Distilling Co. tasting room on the ground floor. **marbledistilling.com**

POWERS ART CENTER; HONEY BUTTER DINER

Powers Art Center

Get out

The 15,000-square-foot **Powers Art Center**, designed by Hiroshi Nanamori, showcases a remarkable collection of Jasper Johns prints and Takashi Nakazato ceramics alongside rotating exhibits. Free of charge, the center's architecture, adorned with a reflective pool and set against a stunning mountain backdrop, merits a visit. **powersartcenter.org**

The **Rio Grande ARTway** is one-mile stretch of paved trail running through downtown. An archway created by more than 35 Roaring Fork Valley artists marks the entrance of a path enhanced with sculptures, picnic and gathering spaces, historic artifacts, gardens, mosaics, hammocks, and more. **carbondalecreativedistrict.com/artway**

Located at North Face Park, the 17,300-square-foot **Carbondale SK8 Park** offers Colorado's first 18-foot full pipe with a capsule end—plus pump bumps, hips, pyramids, and a mini bowl section to complement the adjacent intermediate and expert terrain where the bowls are deeper and steeper. **carbondalerec.com**

Good eats

A landmark in Carbondale for decades, **Honey Butter** is a retro diner featuring hearty breakfast classics such as chicken and waffles, steak and eggs, and biscuits and gravy. An extensive milkshake menu ranges from old-fashioned (strawberry, chocolate, vanilla) to next-level (salted caramel pretzel, Nutella banana) to turbo-charged (the Unicorn Birthday Party has skittles, a cake slice, sprinkles, lollipop, cherries, and bubble tape). **honeybutterdiner.com**

Honey Butter Diner

Cozy and iconic, **Village Smithy** is where locals have been brunching on the weekends since 1975. The Smithy also serves lunch and offers a wide variety of burritos to go. **villagesmithy.com**

You will find traditional Thai ingredients like mint, cilantro, fish sauce, and shrimp paste on the menu, but the dishes at **Phat Thai** are anything but authentic. Calling itself "a curious new breed of southeast Asian eatery," the restaurant offers Thai-inspired cuisine that it refuses to call fusion. **phatthai.com**

Good taste

Road trippers who need their coffee now can skip the line at **Mojo's Coffee** and serve themselves, paying with cash or a card at the honor box. The burritos here are top-notch, as is the vibe.
mojosouray.com

You'll find the best burger in town at **Maggie's Kitchen,** but you won't be the only one looking for it—you'll need to get in line, which tends to stretch from the counter out the door of the burger joint.
703 Main St., Ouray

Owners Hans Vanderploeg and Chef Cory Sargent work with local farms, dairies, and ranches to source fresh ingredients for the approachable fare at **Brickhouse 737**.
brickhouse737.com

Don't leave Ouray without picking up some truffles, caramels, fudge, or scrap cookies—buttery sugar dough mixed with chocolate-making scraps—from **Mouse's Chocolate & Coffee**.
mouseschocolates.com

Generous pours of spirits handcrafted from glacial waters, local barley and blue corn, and rare European juniper berries draw discerning cocktail lovers to the tasting room at **KJ Wood Distillers**.
kjwooddistillers.com

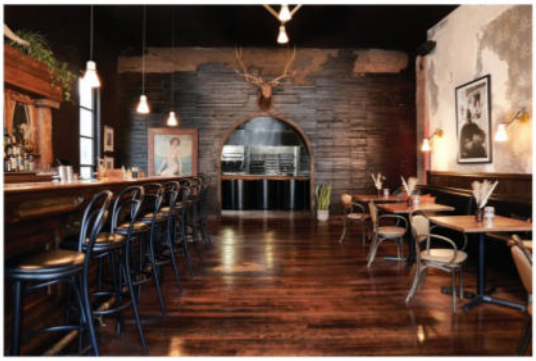
Not your typical taco joint, **Gnar** (short for gnarly gourmet tacos and margs) in Ridgway fills its fusion tacos with things like house-made lamb sausage and Korean barbecue and its restaurant walls with things like funky artwork and mad stickers.
gnarlytacos.com

Ouray & Ridgeway

As you navigate the serpentine curves of the Million Dollar Highway—a 25-mile stretch of US-550 between Silverton and Ouray—you'll feel the pulse-quickening thrill of danger and majesty that defines the quintessential Colorado experience. Ouray awaits at the end of this adrenaline-soaked drive, where steep grades and winding turns flirt with the precipice of vertiginous cliffs. With no guardrails to hinder your view, the raw splendor of jagged peaks unfolds in panoramic perfection around every bend, just begging you to take your eyes off the road. Resist the urge to avoid becoming a statistic on what FindMyPlate named the second most dangerous road in the U.S. earlier this year due to its high elevation (more than 11,000 feet at its peak) and those aforementioned guardrail-free hairpin turns. This stretch of road is the crown jewel of the ultimate Colorado road trip; if you've got nerves of steel, prepare to be utterly captivated.

Get there

From Carbondale, head west on CO-133 to CO-92, which will lead you to Delta and Montrose, two towns with rich cultural and historic attractions. From Montrose, take US-550 S. to Ouray. To experience the Million Dollar Highway, continue south along US-550 toward Silverton before looping back into the historic town.



Top, The Western Hotel; *above,* The Kitchen at The Western Hotel

Set in an amphitheater of jagged mountains, Ouray's natural setting provides a magnificent backdrop for this enchanting hamlet that's been dubbed the "Switzerland of America," the "outdoor recreation capital of Colorado" and the "Jeeping capital of the world." Renowned for its wildlife, wildflowers, and waterfalls, the town is a mecca for hikers, bikers, horseback riders, and four-wheelers (commercial Jeep tours have been navigating the high mountain passes since 1946).

Incorporated in 1876, two months after Colorado became a state, Ouray is home to more than 300 Italianate and Romanesque brick buildings built in the late 19th and early 20th centuries—when the town thrived as a supply center for nearby mining settlements—and streets lined with Victorian Queen Anne houses. Today, those buildings have been reimagined as quaint boutiques, restaurants, and hotels. You can take in a film, concert, or lecture at the **Wright**

THE WESTERN HOTEL, STEPHAN WERK OF WERK CREATIVE

Wright Opera House

Opera House, an imposing brick and iron building that opened in 1888 (wrightoperahouse.com), and explore a re-created frontier pharmacy at the **Ouray Alchemist Museum** (ourayalchemist.com). Located smack in the center of town, **Ouray Brewery** draws crowds with beers made from local ingredients, hearty pub food, and a lively rooftop offering spectacular views (ouraybrewery.com). Get a little taste of history at **The Outlaw**, Ouray's oldest operating dining establishment, serving up steak, seafood, and pasta since 1968. The restaurant-cum-museum also offers live piano music, a hat collection (including one from John Wayne), and lots of historical photos. Yes, The Duke ate here (outlawrestaurant.com).

On Ouray's quaint Main Street, a circa 1898 building that originally served as a saloon and brothel has been reinvented as the chicly intimate **Imogene Hotel + Rooftop Bar**. Exposed historic stamped tin ceilings, clawfoot tubs, and restored hardwood floors bearing the marks of flame from old oil lamps are part of its charm; the wood-stove sauna and open-air shower, a rooftop bar with fire pits and incredible views, and a lively whiskey bar in the lobby add to the social appeal (theimogene.com).

Just around the corner, **The Western Hotel** is a splendid architectural relic among the few frontier-style wood-frame boarding houses still standing in the West. Built in 1891 and meticulously restored by Zeppelin Development from 2020 to 2022, the hotel reopened this spring to be a glamorous home base for your Ouray adventures. Forty small former boarding houses were transformed into 16 refined suites outfitted with fireplaces and other thoughtful touches. Travel tip: book the King Deluxe room and enjoy a soak in an original vintage bathtub with mountain views, plus a private second-floor patio with a view of Box Canyon (thewesternouray.com).

Head into that canyon to **Box Cañon Falls Park**, a wildlife viewing and waterfall park within easy walking distance of downtown. Inside the park, Canyon Creek drops behind a rock face and emerges far below in a dramatic 285-foot waterfall that thunders into a narrow quartzite gorge. A steel walkway, anchored to the cliff face, allows access directly to the falls for best viewing (visitouray.com).

VISIT OURAY, GOLD MOUNTAIN VIA FERRATA

Soak it all in

Part of Colorado's Historic Hot Springs Loop, Ouray is awash with opportunities for sulfur-free soaks in geothermal hot springs. The family-friendly **Ouray Hot Springs Pool** includes five geothermal heated mineral pools ranging from 74 to 106 degrees. There are water slides, an obstacle course, a volleyball net, and a climbing wall, as well as a kid-free soaking section (ourayhotsprings.com). For a more peaceful retreat, escape to **Wiesbaden Hot Springs**, a European-style spa where natural, untreated spring water continually flows. The highlight: a subterranean vapor cave—a natural underground steam room and shallow soaking pool ranging in temperature from 107 to 109 degrees (wiesbadenhotsprings.com).

Get Out

Time to climb—even if you've never scaled a mountain before. Italian for "iron path," a via ferrata is a fixed climbing route made up of metal rungs that provide handholds and footholds to get you up sheer mountain faces with relative ease, and Ouray's got three of them. **Gold Mountain Via Ferrata** combines hiking, history, and climbing as it scales the rocky croppings for which its named, dipping in and out of mining sites and through a tunnel over its 1,000-foot elevation gain. The dopamine-dumping fun isn't over once you reach the top. There's a 4-inch wide, 250-foot-long suspension bridge hanging 200 feet above the cliffs below that you've still gotta traverse. **goldmountainranch.com**

Gold Mountain Via Ferrata

If you'd rather be on the water, **Rigs Fly Shops** guide service will hook you up with kayaks or stand-up paddleboard and instructions on how to use them at the nearby Ridgway State Park. **fishrigs.com, cpw.state.co.us**

If you can snag a coveted spot at the lakefront campground, do it! **Ridgway** is a certified dark sky community, so the stars appear to shine extra bright. Ridgway is one of the few Colorado communities to be both a state-certified Creative District and a Colorado Main Street community. The center of gravity is downtown, where charming Old West-style storefronts are packed with galleries, studios, and shops featuring ceramics and pottery, metalwork, photography, paintings, sculptures, Native American crafts, and more. **ridgway-fuse.org** DLM

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Let's take a trip to the top to explore the unparalleled display of ostentation, indulgence, and good ol' fashioned excess that abounds in Colorado's most opulent accommodations.

St. Regis Aspen:
Aspen Mountain Suite

Suite WARS

Welcome to the ultimate guide to Colorado's most extravagant hotel suites. Whether you're a seasoned traveler or a person of refined tastes seeking a luxurious escape, we've curated a list of suites that will meet even the most exacting standards.

Luxury isn't just about the trappings of wealth. It's also about the experience. That's why we've focused on suites that offer a true sense of place, where you can immerse yourself in the natural beauty of Colorado while enjoying world-class service and amenities.

And of course, we haven't forgotten about style. We've looked for suites that embody the refined, elegant aesthetic that discerning travelers expect. Join us on this journey through Colorado's most luxurious hotel accommodations, and get ready to experience the suite life.

by Robyn Griggs Lawrence & Stephanie Wilson

St. Regis Aspen: *Presidential Suite*

In the luxurious realm of Aspen, the St. Regis Presidential Suite reigns supreme. This sumptuous hideaway is a paean to the golden age of mountain manors, with interiors that artfully blend winter grays and warm summer tones to create an environment as cozy as it is chic. Black-and-white accents, natural mirrors, and metallic textures finish the scene, made complete by breathtaking Aspen Mountain views.

Within this elevated abode (and within the Aspen Mountain suite much like it a few floors below), custom furnishings and an elegant marble fireplace provide a warm welcome. Antique brown leather club chairs sit alongside a baby grand piano, begging you to tickle the ivories in between sips of wine from the chiller. And should you tire of the live entertainment, a 55-inch flat screen television and a state-of-the-art Bang & Olufsen sound system stand at the ready.

The separate bedroom, featuring a king bed and sitting area, is where sweet dreams meet sweet opulence. Marble bathrooms? Check. Deep-soaking bathtub? Absolutely. Double vanities, walk-in closet, bathrobes, and Remède Spa bath amenities? You bet.

This mountain manor experience wouldn't be complete without the unparalleled St. Regis Butler Service, available around the clock to cater to your every whim.

The St. Regis Aspen Resort
315 E. Dean St., Aspen | 970.920.3300 | marriott.com

Sweet Escapes

The Little Nell: Paepcke Suite: Wall coverings by Maya Romanoff and a custom-designed Mattaliano game table are just the beginning.

Hotel Jerome: The Aspen Times Suite The view of Aspen Mountain alone is worth the price of a stay at this historic retreat.

ST. REGIS ASPEN

Denver/Front Range

The Four Seasons Hotel Denver: *Presidential Suite*

indulge in the good life at the Four Seasons Hotel Denver in the three-bedroom Presidential Suite, where comfort, style, and a hint of swagger come together to create a top-floor haven. This is the kind of place where you can kick back and appreciate the world from an elevated 16th-floor perspective, both literally and figuratively.

The Rocky Mountains have never looked better than through the west-facing, floor-to-ceiling windows of this 3,090-square-foot playground where the line between art and life blurs. Original works by local artists adorn the walls and a Shabui stone fireplace serves as a striking centerpiece of the space.

Room for 10? Indeed. Gather your crew in the well-appointed living and dining area complete with a stunning piano and a dining table set for eight. A study and butler's pantry are part of the package, which is available in one-, two-, or three-bedroom configurations to ensure everyone's got their own space—complete with marble bathrooms, of course. The guest powder room ensures that everyone can freshen up in style after taking advantage of the suite's fitness studio.

In the primary bedroom, a massive walk-in closet and second fireplace add to the incredible appeal, as does the master bath, where a deep soaking tub affords city and mountain views from the oversized windows—an idyllic spot to watch a colorful Colorado sunset.

The Four Seasons Hotel Denver
1111 14th St. | 303.389.3000 | fourseasons.com

THE FOUR SEASONS

Sweet Escapes

The Broadmoor: Penrose Suite The three-bed spot includes a dining room, sitting room, formal living room, glass-enclosed sun room, and much more.

The Elizabeth Hotel: The Music Suite Highlights include a baby grand piano, state-of-the-art sound system, full kitchen, soaking tub, and balcony.

Lumière with Inspirato:
Exclusive Five Bedroom Penthouse

The Telluride Lumière with Inspirato Exclusive Five Bedroom Penthouse emerges as a luxurious titan, towering above the competition. Nestled at the base of Lift 4 in Mountain Village, this boutique residence melds five-star hotel amenities with the intimacy of a lavish alpine retreat.

With accommodations for 11, this 3,715-square-foot penthouse is an ode to indulgence. Hardwood hickory floors, hand-blown glass fixtures, and original artwork set the stage for your own personal Telluride Shangri-La.

The mountainous kingdom features a spacious living and dining area, complete with a gas fireplace, offering ample room for revelry, while the chef's kitchen, complete with a Wolf gas range and Subzero refrigerator, caters to culinary whims. An oversized patio with a private hot tub enhances the appeal.

All five of the bedrooms boast en suite bathrooms, while the primary bath features a steam shower and separate deep soaking tub for an après-adventure respite enhanced by Lather bath products. Smart TVs and Bluetooth soundbars continue to seamlessly elevate the entertainment experience.

Lumiére with Inspirato
118 Lost Creek Lane, Telluride
970.369.0400 | lumierewithinspirato.com

LUMIÈRE WITH INSPIRATO

Sweet Escapes

Mountain Lodge: Three-Bedroom Suite A full kitchen, fireplace, open-concept living and dining area, and a private balcony highlight this ski-in, ski-out stay.

The Peaks: Residence 820 Three stories, four bedrooms, four baths and 270-degree mountain views from a 10th floor perch star in this space.

The Sebastian Vail: Grand Galerie Penthouse

In the high-stakes game of Colorado's Suite Wars, the Sebastian Vail Grand Galerie Penthouse soars above the competition like an eagle on alpine thermals. This slope-side sanctuary boasting a whopping 5,300 square feet of living space is an alpine Versailles.

With five bedrooms and five and a half baths, plus an exquisite Italian handcrafted Gullo Firenze kitchen that rivals that of any Michelin-starred establishment, this penthouse is the haute couture of mountain retreats. There's a 360-degree view of Vail Mountain and the Gore Range and an impressive collection of works by Mexican artists that would make any gallery curator swoon. A lavishly furnished lanai with panoramic mountain views is perfect for sipping cocktails and planning the next dinner, hike, or mountain bike excursion.

Dine inside under the divine cathedral skylight, then unwind by the fireplace in the opulent living room before retiring to the media room for a cinematic experience worthy of a Sundance screening.

This new addition to Vail's hospitality landscape sets the gold standard for luxury that even Midas would envy.

The Sebastian Vail
16 Vail Road, Vail
970.331.0698 | thesebastianvail.com

THE SEBASTION VAIL

Sweet Escapes

The Arrabelle at Vail Square Penthouse: The four-bedroom, 2,652-squar-foot suite boasts a handcrafted wine cave and imported French antiques.

The Ritz-Carlton Bachelor Gulch Suite: If the double-sided fireplace in the living area won't keep you warm, there's a fireplace in the primary bath, too.

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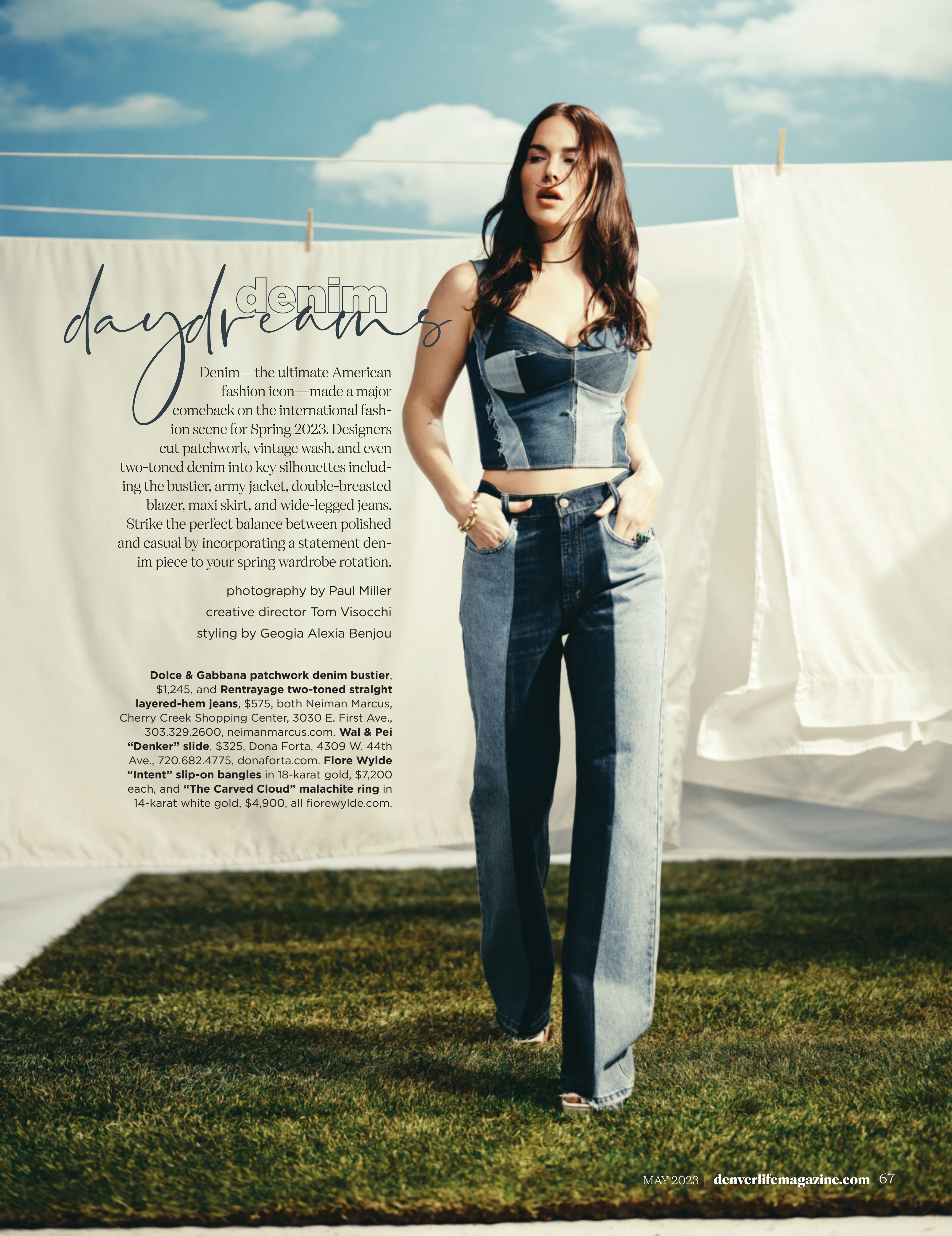
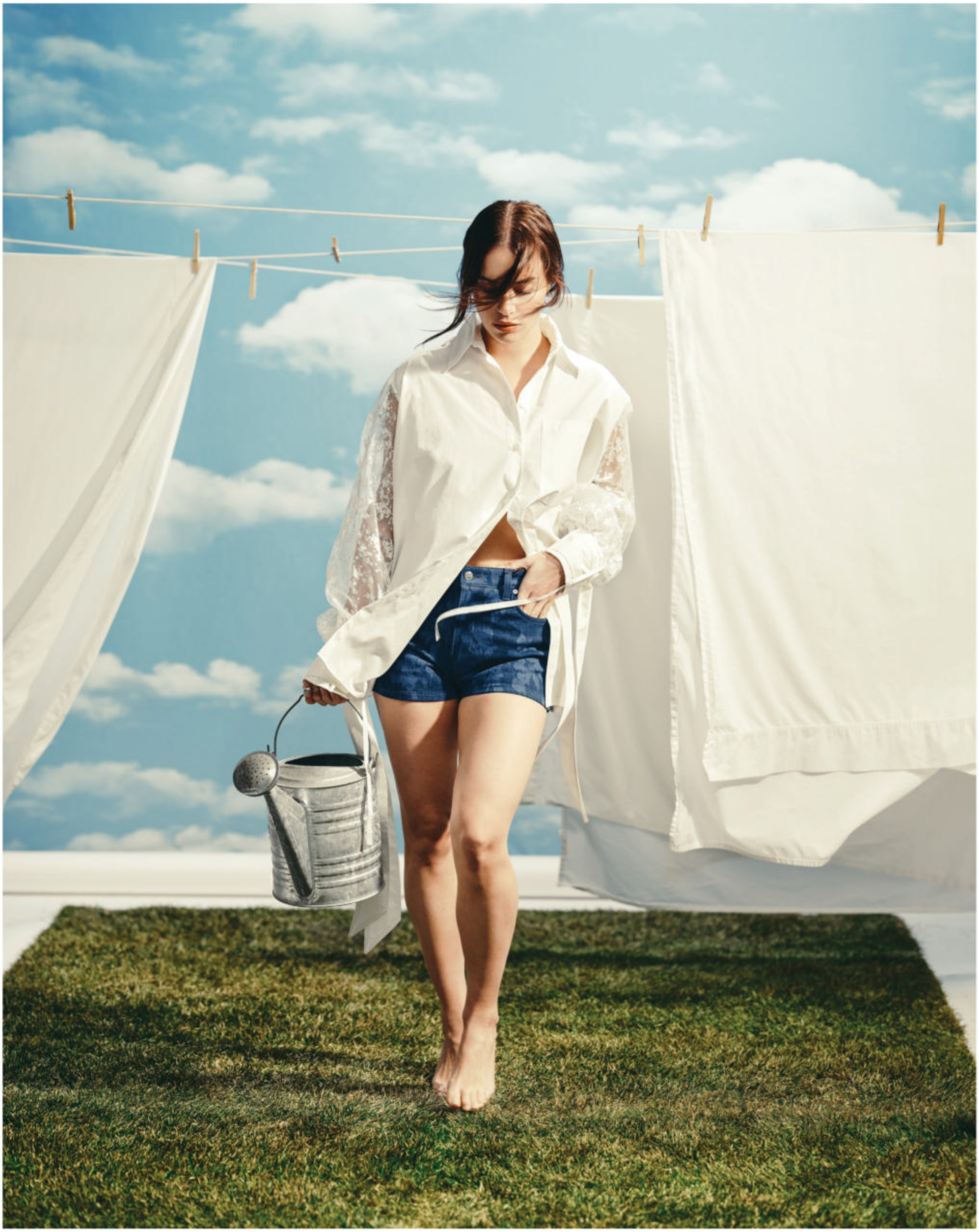


denim daydreams

Denim—the ultimate American fashion icon—made a major comeback on the international fashion scene for Spring 2023. Designers cut patchwork, vintage wash, and even two-toned denim into key silhouettes including the bustier, army jacket, double-breasted blazer, maxi skirt, and wide-legged jeans. Strike the perfect balance between polished and casual by incorporating a statement denim piece to your spring wardrobe rotation.

photography by Paul Miller
creative director Tom Visocchi
styling by Geogia Alexia Benjou

Dolce & Gabbana patchwork denim bustier, $1,245, and **Rentrayage two-toned straight layered-hem jeans**, $575, both Neiman Marcus, Cherry Creek Shopping Center, 3030 E. First Ave., 303.329.2600, neimanmarcus.com. **Wal & Pei "Denker" slide**, $325, Dona Forta, 4309 W. 44th Ave., 720.682.4775, donaforta.com. **Fiore Wylde "Intent" slip-on bangles** in 18-karat gold, $7,200 each, and **"The Carved Cloud" malachite ring** in 14-karat white gold, $4,900, all fiorewylde.com.

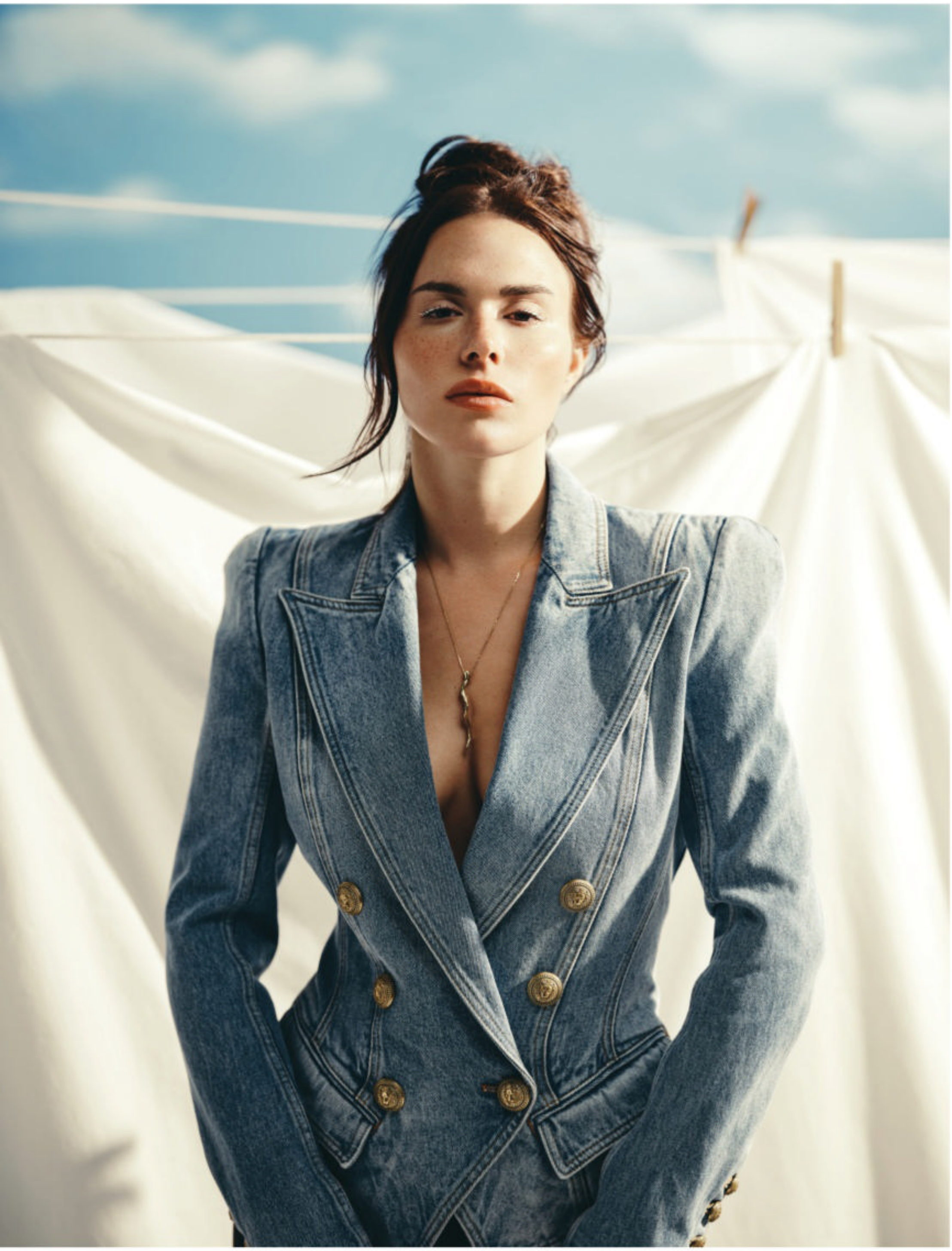


Left page: **Sandy Liang "Slight" cotton tank**, $125, and **Batsheva denim "Cera" skirt**, $375, both Recital, 1362 27th St., 720.524.4198, shoprecital.com. **Jacqiue Aiche blue opal bead necklace** with pink tourmaline and white diamonds in 14-karat yellow gold, $7,000, Metalmark, metalmarkfinejewelry.com.
Above: **Etro floral denim shorts**, $590 and **Elleme cotton and lace sleeve blouse**, $545, both Neiman Marcus. **Suzy Landa "Knife Edge" diamond hoop earrings** in 18-karat white gold with white diamonds, $4,950, Metalmark, 3615 W. 32nd Ave., 720.441.4635, metalmarkfinejewelry.com.

Right page: **Toteme cotton army jacket**, $680 and **Eterne stretch cotton mini tank dress**, $165, MAX, 250 Columbine St., 303.321.4949, maxfashioncolorado.com. **GRLFRND "Vintage Lasso" denim jeans**, $225, Dona Forta. **Fiore Wylde "Love Me 2x" ring** in 18-karat yellow gold with white diamonds, $10,111, and **"Intent Spiral" band** in 18-karat gold, $950, all fiorewylde.com.
Hanging Jeans: **Closed "Aria" stretch denim jeans**, $395, Jones + Co., 1949 Pearl St., Boulder, 303.718.2704, shopjonesandco.com. **L'Agence "Houston" crop seamed wide-leg jeans**, $275, Rebel, Cherry Hills Marketplace, 5910 S. University Blvd., Greenwood Village, 720.283.1004, rebeldenver.com.

Michael Kors Collection stretch matte jersey and paillette turtleneck bodysuit, $1,950 and **Balmain strappy denim mini dress**, $2,295, both Neiman Marcus. **Samantha Louise Jewelry "Falling Star" hoop earrings** in 18-karat yellow gold with white diamonds, $2,975, Metalmark, metalmarkfinejewelry.com.

Right page: **Gabriela Hearst Elly patchwork denim shirt**, $870, MAX. **Fiore Wylde "Ray of Light" earrings** in 18-karat gold with orange garnet and white diamonds, $2,990, fiorewylde.com. **Nouvel Heritage "Latch" pendant** in 18-karat yellow gold with white diamonds, $4,700 and **"Latch" chain** in 18-karat yellow gold with white diamond accents, $2,100; and **Jade Trau "Envoy Riviera" necklace** in 18-karat yellow gold with white diamonds, $11,000, all Metalmark, metalmarkfinejewelry.com. **Jacques Marie Mage "Gordon" sunglasses** in Indigo, $690, Queen City Optical Provisions, 4321 W. 44th Ave., 303.353.4007 queencityoptical.com.



Fashion Crew

photographer
Paul Miller
@paulmillerphoto

creative director
Tom Visocchi
@tomtom1983

stylist
Georgia Alexia Benjou
@gabenjou

model
Madison Hauck
Wilhelmina Denver
wilhelminadenver.com
@madisonhauck
@wilhelminadenver

camera assistant
Cass Letson
@cass.letson.images

Right Page: **Balmain crystal embroidered paillette tweed crop T-shirt**, $1,795, Neiman Marcus. **Frame Le Palazzo high-rise wide-leg jeans**, $260, Rebel. **Metalmark House Collection "Spike" hoop earrings** in 14-karat yellow gold with white diamonds, $3,600, metalmarkfinejewelry.com.
Above: **Balmain 6-button denim blazer**, $3,095, Neiman Marcus. Fiore Wylde **"Coral Carmella" branch necklace** in 18-karat gold, $1,650, fiorewylde.com.

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CARRY A CANVELLE
Canvelle transforms plastic into posh travel accessories. P. 84

Forever flowers

Farmer's market season is upon us. And our favorite thing to bring home is a bouquet of blooms that breathes new life into our abodes. **PICKLETOWN FLOWERS CO**'s mobile truck or cart bike will at the South Pearl Street Farmer's Market on Sundays selling flowers by the stem so can create a bouquet with all your favorite florals. Or, if you are looking for a professional arrangement that is subtle and sophisticated, founder Jessica Sparzak's eye for floral design is unparalleled, and her fresh take on dried blooms offers longevity and sophistication that can't be matched. She sells her dried arrangements at Sapor Coffee, Blue Sparrow, and Queensberry Rules Cafe. With muted hues and subtle textures, these bouquets are the perfect addition to any chic interior and can last for months when kept out of direct sunlight and not watered. **pickle.town**

WRITTEN BY SAHALE GREENWOOD; PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF ARIANNE

Scents of place

Cocktail institution **Death & Co** created a fragrance that pays homage to Denver through notes of pine and cannabis. *by Stephanie Wilson*

LOS ANGEL
de Kloka x Death
DENV
de Kloka x Dea
NEW YORK
de Kloka x Death

COURTESY DEATH & CO

In a city that embraces the unconventional, Death & Co, the trailblazing cocktail institution with locations in New York, Denver, and Los Angeles, continues to push the boundaries of luxury. This time, they've partnered with Northern California-based de Kloka to create a trifecta of botanical perfumes inspired by their iconic bars.

Crafted by Jackie Brenner, the mastermind behind de Kloka Botanical Perfumes, the Denver perfume offers an ethereal olfactory experience that perfectly encapsulates the city's cool mountain air. Imagine walking through a coniferous forest, the scent of vivid green pine absolute and fresh patchouli mingling with the earthiness of saddle leather. The heart of the fragrance is cool and green with Persian cypress and poplar buds, while fresh citrus top notes of grapefruit and lime evoke the aroma of dried hops and cannabis.

Brenner, a former mixologist and award-winning cocktail creator, found her true calling in the ancient art of perfumery. Her unique background allowed her to approach the creation of these unisex scents with the same thoughtfulness and finesse as she once did with her cocktails. "Capturing the essence of the Death & Co experience in perfume form was a sensory adventure down memory lane for me," says Brenner. "I tapped into all of my past experiences in the bar world, the different sensations of sitting at a Death & Co bar, and the smells and textures they evoke.

Botanical perfumes, known for their intimate and ethereal nature, are made from completely natural ingredients—a far cry from the overpowering synthetic fragrances we often encounter. These hand-blended works of liquid art are designed to wear close to the body, inviting reapplication and seamlessly complementing an evening of fine dining and drinking.

And speaking of drinking, Death & Co's national beverage director Tyson Buhler has crafted three cocktails inspired by the scents—see recipe to the left. For the full olfactory experience, wear one while sipping the other. DLM

Death & Co
The Ramble Hotel
1280 25th St.
deathandcompanymarket.com

DENVER

Death & Co's national beverage director Tyson Buhler developed three cocktail recipes inspired by the brand's new trio of scents, best enjoyed alongside the botanical perfume. Denver's beverage is earthy yet cooling, the cocktail plays alongside the high alpine scent by using herbal, earthy aromas and flavors balanced by bright fir buds and hops.

INGREDIENTS

- **1¼ oz. Bimini Gin**
- **½ oz. Clear Creek Douglas Fir Brandy**
- **1 oz. fresh grapefruit juice**
- **½ oz. fresh lemon juice**
- **½ oz. Cinnamon Syrup**
- **¼ oz. Yellow Chartreuse**

DIRECTIONS

Shake all the ingredients with ice, then double strain into a chilled coupe. No garnish.

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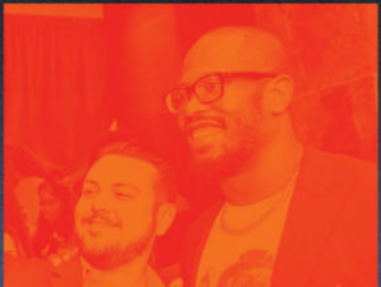

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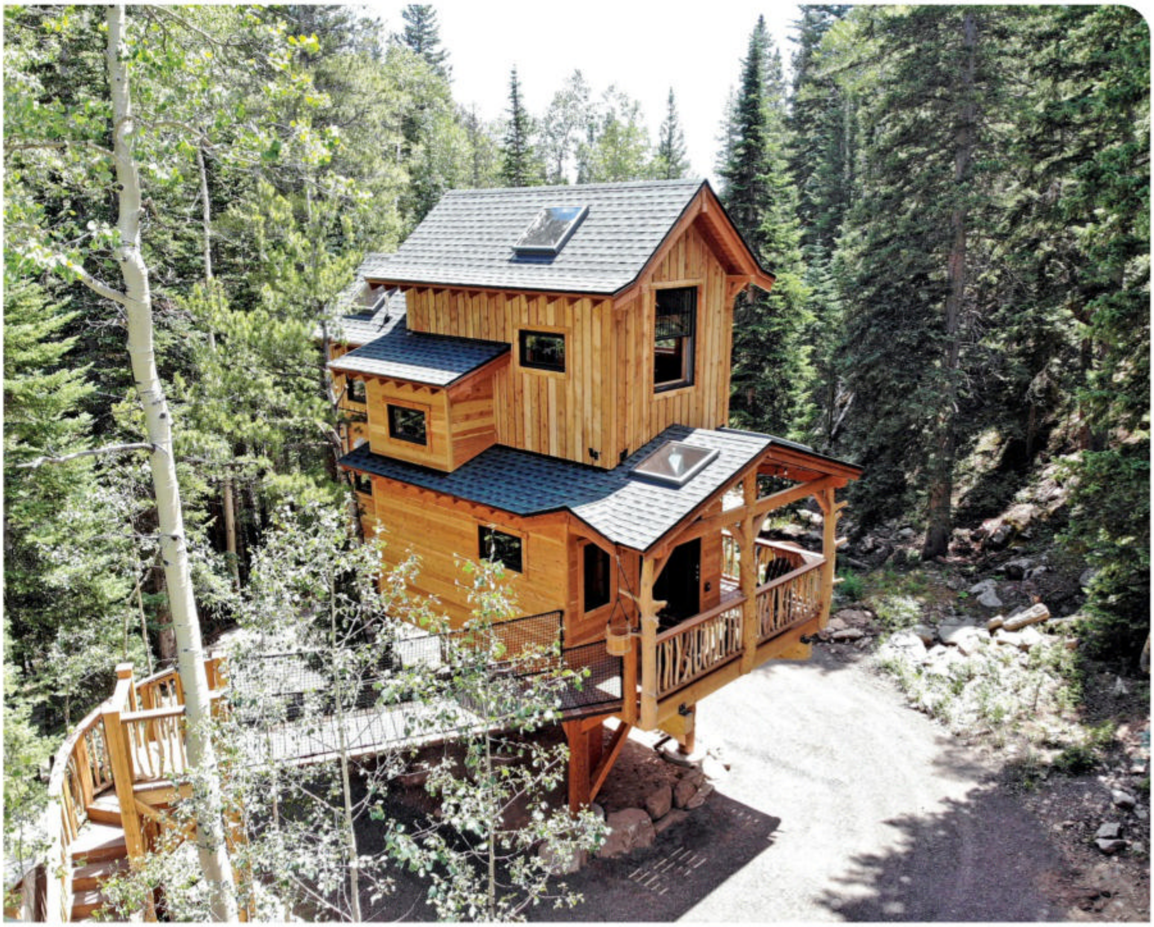

RENT ME
"The Ultimate Treehouse and Cabin Experience" boasts rave reviews on VRBO. Just 5 miles from Black Hawk and Central City, this rental is surrounded by a 4-mile private hiking trail, offering an unbeatable location.

Arboreal abodes

Treecraft Design Build reimagines treehouses as luxurious, playful retreats.

by Sahale Greenwood

TREECRAFT DESIGN BUILD

Treehouse rentals have captured the imagination of modern travelers, offering Instagram-worthy aesthetics and secluded retreats that blend comfort with nature. Platforms like Airbnb and VRBO have experienced a surge in demand for these unique timber abodes, with many nestled in the Rockies. The treehouse-inspired dwelling pictured here was designed and built by Treecraft Design Build, a Fort Collins-based full-service firm specializing in custom treehouses, playhouses, playgrounds, and other small structures. The firm's innovative designs have garnered attention from clients nationwide seeking a one-of-a-kind getaway with an eco-friendly touch.

THE PERFECT WAY TO START THE DAY IS ORGANIZED
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MEET THE MAKER

After earning Bachelor's and Master's degrees in architecture, Aaron Smith founded Treecraft Design Build to bring luxury and innovation to treehouse designs. Raised in Virginia, Smith fondly recalls childhood memories of treehouses built by his father. As a father himself, Smith has continued this tradition, constructing a canopy cabin with his two sons in their Fort Collins backyard. His passion for sustainable architecture and childhood nostalgia fueled the creation of Treecraft, which has quickly gained a reputation for delivering dreamy, bespoke treehouses.

RENT THE ROOTS

Treecraft's creations range from traditional children's treehouses to sophisticated structures like the Black Hawk cabin, which is complete with running water, electricity, heating, and AC. Treehouse construction presents unique challenges, such as insulating water supply lines and accommodating tree growth without damaging the host. Smith addresses these issues by using treehouse attachment bolts to fasten reinforcement beams, allowing the tree ample room to grow and sway.

These custom-built treehouses often incorporate elements of the surrounding environment, seamlessly integrating the structure with the landscape. Skylights, large windows, and outdoor decks provide stunning views and foster a deeper connection with nature, while modern amenities ensure comfort and relaxation. Some even feature luxe touches like hot tubs, outdoor showers, and gourmet kitchens, elevating the treehouse experience to new heights.

With structural concerns addressed, Smith unleashes his creativity, turning treehouses into whimsical, playful spaces. "The best part is seeing the playfulness that comes out in our clients and their guests that experience our builds," Smith says, "Yes, you're an adult, but who says you can't enter your house from a bridge and have trap doors in your floor, net lofts above your living room, or a bucket-and-pulley lift to haul snacks up to your deck?"

If you're eager to unleash your inner child and embrace treehouse living, the Black Hawk cabin is available for rent on VRBO as "The Ultimate Treehouse and Cabin Experience." Both VRBO and Airbnb feature a dedicated category for treehouse rentals, with options ranging from cozy cabins to multilevel structures, catering to diverse tastes and budgets. Many of these treehouses not only offer unique accommodations but also promote sustainable tourism, using eco-friendly materials and energy-efficient designs. DLM

A TRUE TREASURE The cabin's owner, Brian, has devised two elaborate treasure hunts: one inside the cabin and another on the property. Guests are also provided with metal detectors for their own scavenger hunts, exploring the property's mining history and unearthing relics from the 1800s.

TREECRAFT DESIGN BUILD

treecraftdesignbuild.com

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Elegant escapes

Denver's Canvelle fuses eco-consciousness with refined taste, creating travel bags and accessories that transform recycled plastic bottles into essential companions for the distinguished traveler. *by Julia Ruble*

CANVELLE
canvelle.com

Your sleek, indispensable travel partner: **Slim Wallet**, $65

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Meet your buttery-soft uniform for journeys near and far: **Crewneck**, $75

Packed with features for the perfect getaway: **Weekender**, $255

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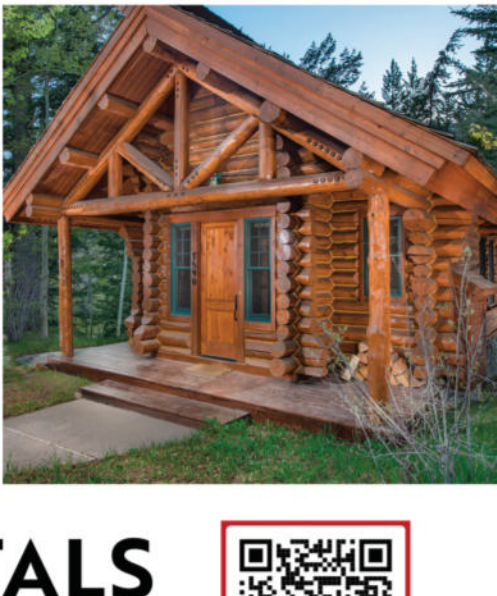

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wander

Swagger Wagon
Just how big is the engine in Cadillac's Escalade-V? Turn to p. 78 to find out.

TRAVEL ▪ GETAWAYS ▪ VISITS ▪ EXPLORE

Inn-trepid explorers

While inn-to-inn hiking excursions are just starting to gain traction in the U.S., Phebe Novic has been enabling travelers to spend days meandering through Rocky Mountain National Park without the weight of the world (or at least everything they'd need to survive out in the wilderness) on their backs since 2005. That was when Novic put together a long-distance walking route from Estes Park to Allenspark—a 42-mile ramble dubbed the Walter Tishma Way. In the classic alpine style of Euro trekking, the course follows a series of trails from one inn to another, allowing hikers to wander for days with nothing but a daypack. Today, she and her husband David operate **FOOTPATHS OF THE WORLD**, an Estes Park-based company that organizes self-guided inn-to-inn hiking tours where you're free to sashay through the park's wilderness at your own pace, all while knowing that a cozy inn awaits you each evening. It's a marriage of the great outdoors with the comforts of the those you find within—kinda like glamping, but with more mileage and fewer mosquitoes. Footpaths of the World handles all the heavy lifting: lodging, luggage transfers, sack lunches, trekking poles, maps, and detailed route guides. Which frees you up to focus on what brings you to Rocky Mountain National Park in the first place: the most beautiful scenery in the world. **footpathsoftheworld.com**

WRITTEN BY STEPHANIE WILSON

Buena Vista

In the heart of the Upper Arkansas River Valley at an elevation of nearly 8,000 feet, you will find the intersection of country charm and mountain immersion. Buena Vista, meaning "beautiful view" in Spanish, is a utopia for outdoor and dining enthusiasts. *by Chloe Wasserstrom*

STATE HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
RAILHEAD
JAILHOUSE
The SLAMMER SALOON
E MAIN ST
HOUSE Rock KITCHEN
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8

1. **THE CELLAR ON RAILROAD**

● The tapas and wine bar presents solely small production wines. This space is perfect for an intimate seating to enjoy organic and sustainably-sourced fare. The delectable small plates are curated with seasonal ingredients to proudly pair with every glass.
301 E. Main St. Unit 180
thecellarbv.com

2. **THE INN AT RAILROAD + MAIN**

● The quaint home-away-from-home has 13 intimate rooms, carefully curated to be rustic and relaxing. The building was constructed in the 1800s and has been fully restored with added boutique and modern comfort aesthetics.
107 N. Railroad St.
theinnbv.com

3. **THE TRAILHEAD**

● Browse and buy from the legendary equipment, clothing, and accessory store. Chat with the knowledgeable staff about their favorite local hikes and visit the Trailblazer blog. Conveniently connected to the store is Simple Eatery where you can fuel up for your adventure with classics such as locally made elk burgers and chicken sandwiches.
402 E. Main St.
thetrailheadco.com

4. **THE SLAMMER SALOON**

● Taste the essence of the wild, wild west at BV's historic jailhouse turned watering hole. The menu features an array of American whiskeys, a dozen rotating tap beers, over 100 hand-picked bottles of bourbon, curated wine, ciders, and more.
412 E. Main St.
bvslammer.com

5. **THE LOFT ORPHEUM THEATER**

● The town's original theater, built in the 1900s, still stands. The venue hosts concerts, weddings, and private events of your choice. The space features a stage, dance floor, warming kitchen for caterers, bar, and suites designed for a bride and groom.
413 E. Main St.
loftmusicvenue.com

6. **HOUSE ROCK KITCHEN**

● Eating just got more eventful. The restaurant's outdoor courtyard encloses a bocce court, sand horseshoe pit, frisbee golf tee, putting discs, Giant Jenga, and a kids zone. The food is fast casual and made from scratch. Top it off with a locally sourced beer or kombucha on tap.
421 E. Main St.
houserockkitchen.com

7. **BARBARA WHIPPLE TRAILHEAD**

● Begin your journey at the River Walk bridge and choose your own adventure. Trails range from beginner to advanced for hikers and cyclists. The trails guide you with anecdotal signs about the valley's discovery.
Barbara Whipple Trailhead
buenavistarec.com

8. **BUENA VISTA WHITEWATER PARK**

● Bike, hike, climb, paddleboard, kayak, and raft on the Arkansas River. Bask in water at the permanent public parkland, and challenge your watersport skills on man-made rapid structures. Let your stress melt away with ample parking, changing rooms, and beaches to set up home base for the afternoon.
715 E. Main St.
buenavistacolorado.org

■ **CKS Paddlefest** Cheer on River Park devotees in a variety of water sport competitions and celebrate with live music May 26–29. **ckspaddlefest.com**

■ **Bluegrass in Salida** May 27–28, journey south to Salida near the headwaters of the Arkansas River and tap into the tunes. **bluegrassonthearkansas.org**

■ **Gold Rush Days** Since 1950, BV has celebrated its history with historical reenactments, a burro race, and concerts. This year, it takes place Aug. 12–13. **buenavistacolorado.org**

illustration by EMILY BURROWES

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Cadillac's swagger wagon

Featuring a hand-built, 682-horsepower V8 the size of a commercial washing machine, the outrageous **Escalade-V** turns a family hauler into a high-speed hero.

by Andy Stonehouse

the stats

16 miles
EPA-estimated highway mileage

4.3
seconds from 0-60

7
seating capacity

While the Cadillac Escalade has long topped the General Motors food chain in terms of prestige and luxury, it's never really been considered a performance vehicle. But with a company-wide shift to electrification now underway, Cadillac has taken a cue from rivals such as the Dodge Challenger Hellcat and created the 682-horsepower 2023 Escalade-V as an end-of-the-era statement about American internal-combustion-engine prowess.

Priced at about $150,000—that's $90,000 more than a physically similar, base-model Chevrolet Suburban—Escalade-V's noisy and ferociously fast 6.2-liter supercharged V8 engine features its technician's signature engraved on the top. And with Brembo brakes, acres of Alcantara suede, and exhaust pipes seemingly swapped from a Corvette Stingray, this is one attitude-driven, hellaciously fast machine. Mileage, bedamned.

ROAD WHISPERER

The 2023 Escalade-V's magnetic ride technology reads every nook and cranny of the road 1,000 times per second, ensuring a drive that's as smooth as it is responsive.

Yes, there's some mixed messaging here, especially as it's still a comfortable, three-row family hauler, more suited to middle-school swim meets than drag strips. But Escalade-V is able to dial up its brawny output for 4.3-second 0-60 sprints, warming up its 22-inch tires in the process, and offers Corvette-styled electronic micromanagement of brakes, shifting, chassis control, and exhaust notes.

It's the perfect automotive overstatement, with a Jekyll-and-Hyde personality to match its hulking presence, and capable (lower-speed) cornering on its stiff air-ride suspension. DLM

IMAGE COURTESY CADILLAC

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3 great spots to

stay learning

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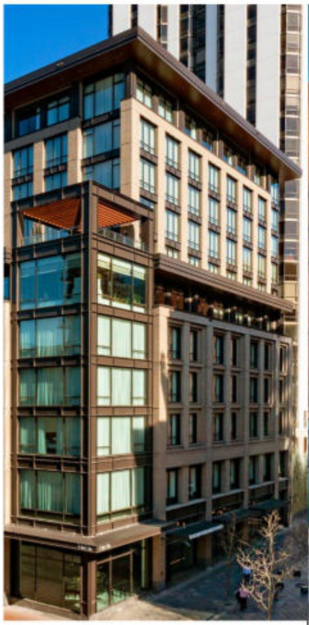


1

Thompson Denver

Whether you are looking to shake things up or slow things down, find what inspires you at this chic boutique hotel in LoDo. Unleash your inner rocker in The Library at Reynard Social during a guitar lesson with music industry pro Chris Bloom, or delve into plant-based wellness during a tincture class led by Herbal Riot. On Fridays, Bitchin' Stitchin' is a community-building workshop designed to facilitate a tangible purging of whatever's on your mind.

1616 Market St.
hyatt.com

2

The Oxford Hotel

Cultivate a new appreciation for local art, music, merchants, and experiences through nightly happenings at the historic hotel in the Union Station neighborhood. From 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. nightly, The Oxford invites guests and neighbors to enjoy unique Colorado offerings like hosted spirit tastings, art activations from Art Students League of Denver and Colorado Photographic Arts Center, retail pop-ups, live music showcases, and more.

1600 17th St.
theoxfordhotel.com

3

The Colorado Chautauqua

With a commitment to outstanding educational programming built right into its name, the historic Colorado Chautauqua has offered the best in arts, culture, and entertainment since 1898—which makes 2023 its 125th birthday. The calendar is filled with a myriad of ways to celebrate: musical performances, film screenings, festivals, educational talks, mindfulness sessions, theater hikes, forest baths, and so much more.

900 Baseline Rd., Boulder
chautauqua.com

comings & goings

- On May 11, **The Eddy Taproom & Hotel** in Golden is pairing Holidaily Brewing's gluten-free brews with a gluten-free tasting menu for the Brewmaster Dinner Series at The Eddy. **theeddygolden.com**
- Starting May 12, **Halcyon, a hotel in Cherry Creek** hosts open-air live concerts at Elevated rooftop bar from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. every Wednesday through Friday all summer long. **halcyonhotelcherrycreek.com**
- Treat yourself and your pooch to a trip to **The Maven** on June 22 or Aug. 26, when Alias K. Masters Studios is doing puppy portraits and dog caricatures in the lobby. **themavenhotel.com**

WRITTEN BY JULIA RUBLE; PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF: THE OXFORD HOTEL, VISIT DENVER; THE THOMPSON DENVER, MAR FIORITO - GAMMA NINE PHOTOGRAPHY; THE COLORADO CHAUTAUQUA

EXPERIENCE AN *ALL NEW* #MS4MS WITH US IN 2023!

Our do-it-your-way approach to spreading awareness and raising funds for the Rocky Mountain MS Center is making some big changes in 2023. As always, supporters can tackle their own summit — any challenge they choose — and spread the word to their own networks to raise support. This year, we also invite you to join us for our first Community Flat 14er!

MULTIPLE SUMMITS 4MS

Join Us on Saturday, June 10th for our first-ever

"Flat 14er"

On the morning of **June 10th** we'll be bringing supporters together at Clear Creek Valley Park in Denver, to tackle one of Colorado's famous 14ers turned on its side! That's a 14,000-foot course that you can walk, jog, run, stroll, or ride — all on an accessible, flat, paved course that's open to anyone!

We hope you'll join our ALL NEW Community Flat 14er, but our traditional MS4MS experience isn't going away!

You can still create your do-it-yourself MS4MS experience just like in years past! MS4MS supporters and teams have walked for distance, jogged in teams, swam laps, and set daily workout goals for themselves — and done it all while supporting the Rocky Mountain MS Center.

Join the Flat 14er or Start a DIY Hike

Join the Flat 14er

We've kicked off #MS4MS with a small Flat 14er event for the Rocky Mountain MS Center's KADEP clients most years since the event began. This year, we're inviting the entire community to take part! Join us on **Saturday morning, June 10,** for our community-wide Flat 14er! We can't wait to see you live and in-person!

Start a DIY Hike

Build your own challenge for our traditional MS4MS experience — Organize your team, set up your fundraising page, and get going! Whether you're hiking, biking, jogging, walking, or any other physical challenge that's right for you, you can build your own #MS4MS Campaign and help the Rocky Mountain MS Center!

ROCKY MOUNTAIN
MS CENTER
MULTIPLE
SUMMITS
4MS

Choose the option that's right for you, or participate in both!

All Flat 14er registrants will also get access to their own MS4MS Fundraising page. Get started today at

MSCenter.org/summits

Join the club

Discover the charm of Cherry Creek at **The Clayton Hotel & Members Club**. *by Stephanie Wilson*

Welcome to Denver's Clayton Hotel & Members Club, an innovative, first-of-its-kind establishment nestled in the heart of the stylish Cherry Creek neighborhood. This 63-room boutique property offers not only high-end, spacious accommodations but also an array of dining options and access to exclusive amenities.

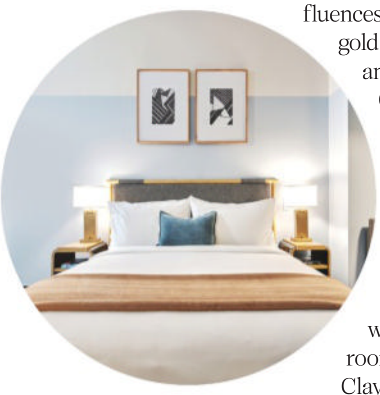
A stay at the Clayton Hotel is not just about indulging in a luxurious retreat, but also about immersing yourself in a thoughtfully curated community that celebrates diverse backgrounds, interests, and cultures. Guests are granted access to the hotel's exclusive membership club, enjoying a plethora of perks and privileges including access to member-only spaces, events, and a vibrant calendar of programs.

The hotel's modernist-inspired design, crafted by AvroKO, pays tribute to the state's natural beauty and storied past, incorporating influences from Colorado's geology, timber architecture, and gold rush history. Clayton's well-appointed rooms are an ode to the rich terrain, geography, and history of Colorado. Infused with a touch of gold rush inspiration and local art, the rooms seamlessly blend comfort and cool. Signature amenities include Sferra linens, DS & Durga toiletries, state-of-the-art fixtures, rain shower heads, and more.

Fitness enthusiasts can take advantage of the all-day access to the hotel's fitness center, equipped with Peloton, Life Fitness, and Woodway treadmills, as well as a much-needed steam room—a rarity in Denver's arid climate.

Clayton's strategic location in the upscale Cherry Creek neighborhood alongside its membership model has earned it comparisons to Soho House. It's an ideal spot for both work and leisure, offering not only a private member's lounge and stylish coworking space but also a rooftop pool and an elevated Mediterranean restaurant with sweeping city views that are worth the price of membership alone.

The Clayton Hotel is more than just a place to rest your head—it's an experience that fosters creativity, connectivity, and an appreciation for the finer things in life. The hotel's art collection, curated by NINE dot ARTS, encapsulates its whimsical nature and commitment to showcasing local talent. DLM



STUDIO KING
With a designated sitting area, this guestroom combines the best design with additional space to relax.

THE CLAYTON HOTEL & MEMBERS CLUB | claytondenver.com

DINING

Experience the essence of Greek coastal charm at **Kini's**, serving light Greek island dishes, approachable wines, and an inclusive cocktail list. Open for dinner nightly and weekend brunch, this inviting eatery on the hotel's ground floor welcomes both guests and the public. Opposite Kini's, **Cretans** offers an energetic Mediterranean wine bar and restaurant experience. Open Tuesday through Saturday evenings, indulge in pour-over martinis, customizable with artisanal pickles and olives, ideally paired with caviar sliders. For a taste of Morocco, discover **Chez Roc**, a cocktail-forward lounge hidden behind Cretans. Clayton hotel guests also enjoy exclusive access to private, members-only restaurants and lounges on the second floor and rooftop, elevating their stay with unparalleled dining experiences.

EXPLORE

Immerse yourself in **Cherry Creek North**, the city's premier shopping destination, with more than 300 retail shops and the city's highest concentration of locally owned stores—all within easy walking distance from the hotel. Lining the streets of the neighborhood is an impressive array of art galleries, fashion boutiques, home furnishings, and a plethora of spas, salons, and fitness studios.

Before you hit the streets, visit cherrycreeknorth.com to chart your plan of retail therapy. Check the calendar to find the latest exclusive deals, boutique promotions, and community events that constantly enliven the neighborhood. From designer trunk shows at Garbarini to an appearance by SNL alumn Kevin Nealon at Fascination St. Fine Art, you'll never wont for ways to be entertained.

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF THE CLAYTON HOTEL & MEMBERS CLUB; CHERRY CREEK NORTH, VISIT DENVER

5 rules for

International travel

UK-based self-guided hiking and cycling tour specialists **Macs Adventure** chose Denver for its North American HQ, so we asked the U.S. sales director Jasper Verlaan to share his insights on mindful international travel.

1 **Be mindful.** As a visitor, honor your role and show respect. Our perspectives are shaped by our communities, upbringing, and beliefs, so keep in mind that views may vary across countries. Do some research in advance, as some behaviors considered acceptable in your culture may be deemed disrespectful elsewhere. Learning basic phrases in the local language is a good way to enhance your enjoyment of the people and places.

2 **Support local.** Engaging with small businesses is at the heart of what Macs Adventure does, and Verlaan encourage others to follow suit. Your spending choices can significantly impact a community and its local economy, so think small. Try regional cuisine at family-owned eateries and shop at mom-and-pop boutiques. Every dollar spent locally supports the community and its families.

3 **Leave no trace.** To keep beautiful places beautiful, travelers must be aware of their impact. Minimize your carbon footprint by avoiding single-use plastics and packing out what you bring. By minimizing our influence, we help safeguard our surroundings for future generations. Courtesy towards the environment, wildlife, and locals is essential.

4 **Embrace new experiences.** Enrich your journey by immersing yourself in local customs, people, and cuisine—cultural engagement fosters personal growth and broadens your perspective. Venture beyond your comfort zone to discover different ways of life and you just may discover something about yourself, too.

5 **Savor the moment.** Slow down and deliberately appreciate your surroundings. Try biking through town or walking instead of driving. Not only are these sustainable travel options, but they also reveal unique sights that might otherwise go unnoticed.

MACS ADVENTURE
macsadventure.com/us

WRITTEN BY JULIA RUBLE

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To order visit bootheel7ranch.com

Popart playbook

by Stephanie Wilson

Meet **Robbie Conaway**, the man behind the lens who makes the mundane magical. As the director and owner of Popart Films, Robbie has become Denver's go-to maestro for transforming unexciting topics into visual masterpieces. With a client list that reads like a who's who of big-name brands, including Capital One, Google, and MetLife, he's no stranger to high stakes storytelling.

But don't let the glitz and glamour of his award-winning work fool you; beneath his creative genius lies a true Denverite at heart. When he's not conjuring up mind-blowing content for Popart Films or serving on the board of directors for the Colorado Film & Video Association, Robbie is busy exploring the city's hidden gems.

We asked the charismatic creative who's always on the pulse of Denver's finest to share his thoughts on the best of what's around. From the best spot for sushi to the best hiking trail not too far from town, he's got you covered. You'll find his unique perspective on Denver's local scene as engaging as his brilliant corporate parody, "Shriek—*The Office* Parody" (seriously, check it out on popartfilms.tv).

The Basics

Name: Robbie Conaway
Occupation: Director/Owner of Popart Films
Neighborhood: Berkeley

Dining + Drinks

Favorite coffee shop: Pablo's Coffee. We don't live near a cafe anymore but we still buy their beans only—best in the world, I'll fight you on that.
Great happy hour: The High Lonesome
Go-to spot for drinks with colleagues: Dimestore Delibar
Favorite cocktail lounge: Union Lodge No. 1
Favorite brewery/distillery: Bear Creek Distillery
Favorite spot to take out-of-town friends: Crow Bar (local dive)
Great for a dinner date: El Five
Favorite sushi: Ototo
Favorite pizza joint: Hops & Pie
An Under-the-radar gem: Odyssey Italian Restaurant
Best spot you've been for dinner in the past year: Ash'Kara

Around Town

Top Friday night activity: Having friends over for cocktails
Best in-city escape: Biking along the Platte River Trail
Favorite hike: Lake Isabelle
Favorite book store: Second Star to the Right
Favorite concert venue: Ophelia's Electric Soap Box
Favorite local artist: Mark Howell
Favorite local musician: Anthony Salvo
Best weekend getaway: Off-roading, dispersed camping, and hiking

COURTESY ROBBIE CONAWAY

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GRAND

GRAND HYATT VAIL

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grandhyattvail.com
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Sill-Terhar Motors Inc. gave the Horseshoe Black Hawk permission to use the Sill - Terhar logo and name as well as permission to use Ford F-150. Actual color and features of truck may vary from images shown. 7316025_0423